

Supporting Exam Preparation

Y11 Parents' and Carers' Handbook 2020/21



Westfield School

Chorus Education Trust

Section 1: key messages

Three things are really important for exam success:

- Remembering necessary knowledge
- Having necessary skills
- Being able to apply the knowledge and skill to answer questions and solve problems

Engaging well in lessons and asking questions of your teachers will support your understanding of key concepts (knowledge and skill).

Revising really well at home will improve your retention (memory) of key information and improve your skill levels.

Practising exam questions will help you to become more successful on applying your knowledge and skill in exam situations.

Being in school and lessons on time, every time, will support all aspects of your learning.

Please remember – every lesson counts! Students with 100% attendance in Y11 last year attained higher in their mock exams. Those with 100% attendance in 2019, achieved more in their final exams.

Over the course of Y11 **aim for 100% attendance** – it makes a huge difference.

Section 2: what is good revision?

This guide is aimed at students but it will be useful for parents and carers to understand this so that they know what to encourage when their child is revising.

“I don’t know how to revise.”

“Revision doesn’t help me.”

“I read my book for an hour and nothing went in.”

These are some of the most common phrases heard by teachers when students are asked how their revision is going.

Students need to understand the following key points before they begin revising to start in the right way:

1. You are able to remember things!

You can remember your phone number. You can remember how to say thousands of words. You can remember the words and tunes to your favourite songs. You can remember the names of all of your friends, how to get to their houses, the names of their parents/carers and probably what they were wearing the last time that you saw them.

Some of you will be able to remember the names of the players in entire football teams, the names of everyone in your favourite TV programme, how to complete your favourite video game, the list goes on. The point is **you are able to remember** everything that you need to know for all of your exams – you just have to know some good ways to get your brain working and admit to yourself that **only lots and lots of hard work will make it happen**.

2. There simply is no substitute for hard work!

It’s a tough message but one that it is better to learn early in life! The best personal success in exams does not go to the cleverest, the luckiest or the most confident. They go to those who work the hardest. This is really good news because every single one of us can work hard, you simply make the choice to give up time that you might prefer to spend doing something else, roll up your sleeves and get on with it!

3. Reading your book is not revising!

It is reading, and reading is not an effective way of remembering things for exams (it is essential that you have read the books for your English exams though!).

The following section tells you all of the things that you should be doing instead of just reading your books.

Section 3: how to revise

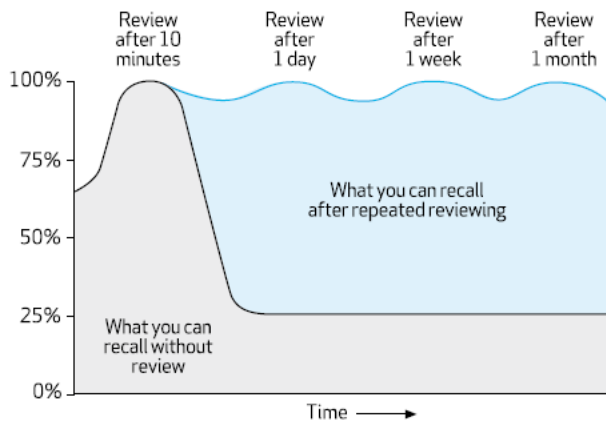
Let's start with some top tips from a psychologist who has researched extensively into learning (<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/jan/08/five-secrets-of-successful-revising>):

1. ***Spread out your revision.*** Leaving gaps between revising the same subject is far more effective than cramming it into a short space of time. This is why we are telling you to start early.
2. ***Practise the thing that you will be tested on.*** Simply learning information is not the best way to go about passing an exam. You need to practise answering the types of questions that you will be asked. Get your hands on some past papers and ask your teachers to mark them. Even better, if you can understand the mark schemes use these to help you understand how to best answer questions.
3. ***Re-structure information rather than just reading it.*** Re-organising the information that you read into lists, diagrams, paragraphs etc makes your brain more active and aids the process of remembering.
4. ***Rest and sleep.*** Good news! Sleeping helps you to remember what you have been learning. Staying up all night to revise just before an exam does not! Please don't nap in class though!

Effectively timing and spreading out revision.

You need to make a revision timetable. This will help you to stick to a programme of revision even when you don't feel like doing any work. When you make your revision timetable, you should follow these rules which have been proven to make your revision more effective.

1. Revise in 20-30 minute chunks (you can't concentrate for much longer) and have a short break (5-10 minutes) before starting again. Do this for 1 - 2 hours before having a longer break.
2. Don't get distracted, if you are only revising for a 30 minute chunk of time, you need to be concentrating hard so turn off your phone, the TV and the music.
3. Revisit the work that you have revised to keep it in your long-term memory. This graph shows you how much more effective this is than revising once and thinking that's the job done.



This means that you should revise something, review it again after a 10 minute break and then continue to review it the next day, then after one week and again one month later. This all takes careful planning.

What should you do when you sit down to revise?

We have already said that just reading your book isn't enough, so what should you do?

The following strategies will help you to remember and understand things better.

- 1) Engage with information by doing the following things as you read:
 - a) Make a mind map.
 - b) Make bullet pointed lists.
 - c) Minimise large sections of notes.
 - d) Draw a picture, a diagram or a doodle.
 - e) Make flash cards or question cards with a key word or question on one side and the answer or a description on the other.
 - f) Create mnemonics and acronyms to help you remember key facts.
 - g) Highlight key words and ideas as you read.
 - h) Make notes to yourself on revision guides, tick what you can remember and underline what you can't. Focus your next revision on the things that you can't remember.
 - i) Make up songs, poems, silly words - anything to help you remember things in your own way.
- 2) Engage with these resources to aid your memory. Stick them on your wall, ask someone to test you, say them out loud, re-write them in a different way, etc.
- 3) You must then practise recalling information. Close your books and cover your resources - try to recreate them. Can you rewrite that set of bullet points 10 minutes later without any help? Keep trying until you can.
- 4) Once you think you can remember ideas, knowledge and facts you need to do practise questions. Mark these using mark schemes or ask your teacher to mark them for you.

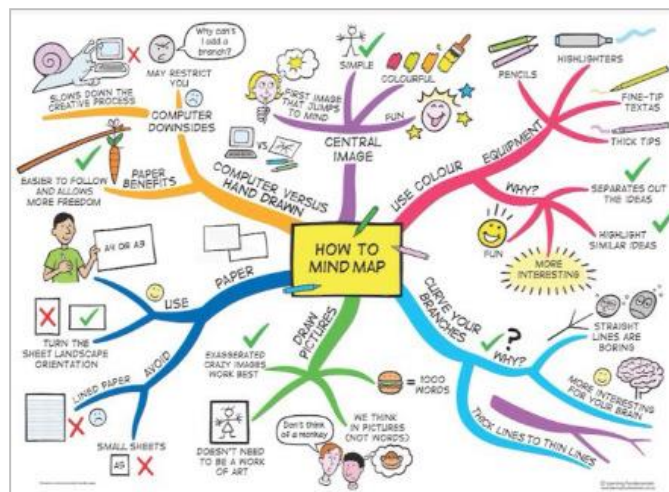
- 5) Think you've cracked it? Find someone who knows nothing about the topic (or a friend who will pretend to know nothing) and try to teach it to them. Teach using drawings, words, diagrams, flowcharts, etc.

How to minimise your notes

- Get all of your notes/learning together for a topic.
- Get an A4 sheet of paper.
- Read through your notes and summarise the key information into bullet points. (You cannot use more than 1 sheet of A4 both sides).
- Once you have the key information minimised to one A4 sheet, get an A5 sheet of paper and repeat the process.
- Once you have your key information onto an A5 sheet, get an A6 card and see if you can minimise the key learning into a series of key words.
- Once you have your A5 card test yourself by seeing if you can recall all the key pertinent points from your notes/learning.
 - a) You could ask someone to cross off your A4 sheet as you verbalise your knowledge, or
 - b) You could write from memory the key knowledge from your prompt words and assess this against your original A4 sheet.

The rules of mind mapping

- Take a large sheet of paper and place it horizontally in front of you.
- Draw a reasonably sized (coloured) memorable central image that represents the topic you are going to be mapping.
- Draw **thick** organic (natural) looking branches radiating outwards from the central image. Make sure to use a different colour to represent each branch.
- Write key-topic words along these branches that represent the central image and the topic you are mapping. Add an image and use appropriate on or at the end of each branch.
- Draw additional branches that extend from your main branches. The words on these branches are sub-topics of the words you wrote on your main branches.
- Keep expanding the mind map outwards with additional sub-sub-topics/keywords and branches



Memory Cards Example

Subject: Chemistry

Topic: Crude oil and fuels

<h3>Hydrocarbons</h3>	<p>Made of carbon and hydrogen only.</p> <p>For 2 marks you have to include 'only'.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alkanes • Alkenes
<h3>Alkanes</h3>	<p>Methane, ethane, propane, etc.</p> <p>Carbon and hydrogen only</p> <p>Name ends in ane</p> <p>Single bonds only</p> <p>Saturated hydrocarbons</p> <p>C_nH_{2n+1}</p>
<h3>Alkenes</h3>	<p>Ethene, propene, butane, etc.</p> <p>Carbon and hydrogen only</p> <p>Name ends in ene</p> <p>Contain a double bond</p> <p>Unsaturated hydrocarbons</p> <p>Double bond means; addition reactions, polymerisation, bromine water test</p> <p>C_nH_{2n}</p>
<h3>Saturated</h3>	<p>Saturated</p> <p>As many hydrogen atoms as it is possible to get in the molecule</p> <p>Unhealthy in fats (heart disease)</p> <p>Saturated fats - high melting points (butter)</p> <p>Unsaturated becomes saturated through hydrogenation (60°C, nickel catalyst)</p>

Mnemonics and acronyms

Mnemonics

These are a highly effective way of getting information in and out of your brain.

Mnemonic devices are memory tricks used to help you learn anything from English vocab to your key historical dates. **Mnemonics** aim to translate information into a form that the brain can retain better than its original form.

Mnemonics converts a long list of monotonous information into a memorable phrase/image that prompts recollections of key information in the pressure of an examination.

Example - mnemonic for remembering the energy stores and transfers in Physics

Most **K**ids **T**oday **L**earn **GCSE** Energy Names

Magnetic, **K**inetic, **T**hermal, **L**ight, **G**ravitational potential, **C**hemical, **S**ound,
Electrical, **E**lastic potential, **N**uclear

Acronyms

If you have a long list to remember in sequence, try taking the first letter from each item in the sequence and creating a word or several words from those letters.

Corporations and organizations do this all the time so customers will remember their business, even if the title is complicated. (UNICEF, NATO, etc.)

Example - acronym

OIL RIG (a useful Chemistry acronym)

The letters here help you remember what happens to electrons in reduction and oxidation if you write it like this...

Oxidation

Is

Loss.

Reduction

Is

Gain.

Section 4: Organising effective revision

In order to support your child in maintaining the best possible study routines we would suggest the following weekly course of action.

Resources

Use the documents stored in the Hub on WEDUC to help organise revision time:

- Prioritising revision topics.doc
- Organising your time.doc
- Revision guidance for each subject
- Exam timetable

How parents and carers can help

- 1.1 Sit down with your child on a Saturday or a Sunday and use a blank revision timetable to plan their week's revision with them.
- 1.2 Put the timetable somewhere prominent in the house, such as on the fridge door, so that everyone knows when revision is happening.
- 1.3 Check in on them when they are revising to discuss how well they feel it is going. Prompt the use of techniques from this booklet if they are having difficulty.
- 1.4 The following Saturday or Sunday, review how well revision has gone over the course of the week and help them to plan a new timetable for the upcoming week.

When planning subsequent timetables consider these points

- 1.5 Students should revisit material which has already been revised at regular intervals. Revising something only once will not ensure that it is retained in the long term memory.
- 1.6 If students have found something difficult, they should plan to revise it again in a different way and revisit frequently.
- 1.7 Ensure that all subjects are being covered.
- 1.8 Encourage coverage of subjects and topics which are difficult. The temptation can be to revise what is already known well.
- 1.9 Encourage further discussion with teachers where extra support is needed.

Section 5: Key Dates

Green highlighted data = All Y11 students involved

Date	Detail
5 th October - 13 th October	Subject assessments to inform the first reporting of Current Working Grades and Most Likely Outcomes
18 th November - 24 th November	Mock Exams 1
7 th January	BTEC Music Exam
11 th January	OCRN Sport Studies Exam
11 th January	OCRN iMedia Exam
12 th January	WJEC Engineering Exam (entries tbc)
14 th January	WJEC Catering Exam (entries tbc)
1 st February	BTEC Enterprise exam
5 th February	BTEC Health and Social Care Exam
8 th - 12 th February	Mock Exams 2
12 th May	BTEC Health and Social Care Exam
14 th May	BTEC Music Exam
14 th May	BTEC Enterprise Exam
17 th May - 25 th June	Y11 GCSE Exams (tbc)
29 th June	Contingency day (tbc)
19 th August	Results day (tbc)

* GCSE Exam Contingency Date

The exam boards reserve this date to reschedule any exams which may be affected by unforeseen national disruption. Parents and carers are advised to not book holidays until after this date. Please be aware that the date above is provisional and we are awaiting confirmation from government and Ofqual.

GCSE May & June Exams 2021

The government and Ofqual are yet to make the decision confirming the timing of the May and June summer exams. Ofqual are currently in discussion about a potential delay to the start of the exams. This will affect the end and contingency dates, so please bear this in mind when booking holidays. Once a decision has been made this will be communicated to parents, carers and students.

GCSE Results Day 2021

We have provisional results day dates above, but this will be affected by any change to the timings of the May & June exams this year.

Section 6: Exam Expectations

What we will provide:

- Before your exams you will receive a timetable detailing all the exams that you have been entered for. Please ensure that your name including spelling and date of birth correct.
- All the exams will take place in the Main or Activity Hall.
- Each exam will have a separate line on your timetable in date order with start times. On the right hand side is your seat number where you will be during that particular exam.
- A layout of the exam hall seating is available on the exam notice board outside of the Activity Hall along with an alphabetical list with seat numbers before each exam.
- If you are feeling unwell before the exam, please let one of your Year team, Mr Griffiths (Deputy Headteacher), Ms Campbell (Exams Manager) or one of the invigilators (exams team) know.
- If there is a fire alarm or an emergency during your exam, please remain in your seat until given further instructions by a member of staff.
- We are all here to help you succeed in doing your best this year, if you have any questions, please just ask a member of the exams team.

What we expect from you:

- Punctuality. Please ensure you arrive at the exam venue 5 or 10 minutes before the start of your exam. This is to ensure we start on time.
- Please ensure that you go to the toilet before the start of the exam.
- You are responsible for bring the equipment you need to your exam. A black pen, pencil, eraser, sharpener, ruler, compass, protractor, calculator in a clear plastic pencil case.
- If you are not sure which calculator to buy, please talk to your Maths teacher.
- No food is allowed in the exam room
- You are allowed to bring water in a clear or transparent bottle. If you bring in any other sort of bottle this will have to be handed in to the exams team and can be collected after the exam.
- You are not allowed to bring in any other equipment or materials (including notes and paperwork in your pockets) other than the equipment mentioned above is classed as **unauthorised**.
- All watches, headphones, mobile phones, mp3/4 players, other technological or web enabled devices are also **unauthorised** and not allowed in the exam room. They are to be switched off and left in your bag.
- During mocks, bags will be left at the back of the main or activity hall. During the exams in the summer, you will be allocated a locker to leave your personal possessions in.
- When you enter an exam room you will be under ‘exam room conditions’.
 - No communication with other students.
This means no talking, gesturing, lending of equipment, and passing of notes or any other non-verbal signalling to each other.
 - You are only to communication with the exams team or a member of staff by raising your hand and waiting for them to come to you.
 - You are to remain in your seat unless instructed
 - You are to follow the instructions of the exams team at all times.
- Failure to follow these rules will be contravention of the regulations known as malpractice. This may lead to sanctions which will affect your exam results.
- Please ensure you familiarise yourself with the regulations. They are available on the website <https://www.westfield-chorustrust.org/exams>

What happens during an exam?

- You enter the exam room in silence with all your equipment ready to start your exam
- Find your allocated seat and desk
- Your exam paper will already be on your desk. Please do not open it until you are instructed to do so, but you may read the instructions on the front of the paper.
- The exam details and a digital clock will be displayed on the screens on the walls in the Main Hall and on white board with a digital clock on the wall in the Activity Hall.
- Ms Campbell will do an announcement before each exam. Please ensure to pay attention to the instructions.
- Ms Campbell will start the exam. A register will be taken at the start of the exam.
- If you have any questions, please ask by raising your hand.
- You complete the exam to the best of your ability
- The exam team will give you a 5 minute warning before the end of your exam. They will then tell you when to stop writing.
- The exam papers will be collected in by the exams team
- You will then be dismissed row by row.
- Your class teacher will be waiting for you to return to lessons. Please ensure you do so quickly and quietly as on some occasions, there may still be exams continuing in the hall.

Together we will make your exams this year a success!

Revision organisation

Within this section you will find subject information regarding mock exam content followed by planners to help students to organise their revision. Students should use the information provided by the subject areas detailing the mock exam content in conjunction with these planners to help create revision timetables.

**Please note, if you are viewing this document electronically on the school website the subject information can be found as a separate set of links on the Y11 page.*

Dates have been added to the revision timetable planners up to the start of mock exams. The half term holiday from week commencing 26th October 2020 provides students with an excellent opportunity for some really focused revision before their mock exams begin three weeks later.

Students who need additional support with their revision should arrange to see Mr Lambourne on a Friday morning when the school library is available from 8.00am as a space to support revision technique.

Tips for creating a revision schedule

Organise revision sessions into 'power hours'. One for each topic. These should include:

- 20 minutes revision (note making, flow chart making, diagram drawing etc.)
- 20 minutes memory work (cover and check, re-writing from memory etc.)
- 20 minutes test and review (exam and practise questions and mark schemes needed)

Return to topics already revised at regular intervals to ensure that information becomes embedded in your long term memory.

Weekly revision timetable - include the **subject and the topic** that you will revise

Week beginning: 12/10/20							
Time of day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Week beginning: 19/10/20							
Time of day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Week beginning: 26/10/20 Half term – use the time that you have this week effectively. Mock exams are only three weeks away!							
Time of day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Week beginning:2/11/20							
Time of day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Week beginning: 9/11/20							
Time of day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Week beginning: 16/11/20 Mocks begin on Wednesday of this week							
Time of day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Week beginning:							
Time of day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Week beginning:							
Time of day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Week beginning:							
Time of day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Week beginning:							
Time of day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

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