

How to revise (realistically)

Problem

There is so much confusing information that you may not know where to start. Students doing socials, revising for 8-12 hours a day and you just feel guilty and stressed and either try and do hours of unproductive revision or don't do any. Don't worry, these tips will help you get started and be consistent.

Pro tip

Do not revise for hours and hours per day, it is not productive. It is really important that you have a balance and you revise smarter. I am going to tell you how.

1

Find out your strengths & weaknesses

For each subject you need to know your strengths and weaknesses. Be honest with yourself, which topics would you do a happy dance for, if they came up in your exam and which ones would you rather never see ever again. The easiest way to do this is get your specification from the exam board website and for each subject, highlight in three different colours. 1. Happy dance , 2. Needs practice 3. Absolutely not yet

2

Prioritise

You need to prioritise your absolutely not YET topics. I have specifically stated YET, because if you prioritise them and embed the knowledge, they may move to the happy dance section. You still need to do the other areas but not as much time needs to be dedicated to them.

Pro Tip

If we don't plan, we do the topics that we love. This makes us feel happy and satisfied because we are good at them, it boosts us with confidence. However we need to challenge ourselves because that is what will improve your grade. However, be kind to yourself, you can't do it YET but you are trying your best. If you need a break, take one. You are up to the challenge, believe in you.

3

Active revision

Teaching someone else

Blurting

Mind maps

Flash cards

Do not re-read notes, this is passive revision and you will need to do four times the amount for the same results.

Teaching someone else - An individual who doesn't know the topic, if they understand after you have taught them, then you are more likely to retain the information.

Blurting - Read your notes, close your notes and write everything you can remember. Check if you have missed anything and add it in a different colour pen. The different colour is to check progress next time you attempt the topic.

Active revision

Mind maps - Create a mind map without looking at your notes first. Then use a different colour to add what you forgot. The different colour will help check progress on your next attempt.

Flash Cards - Read the keyword, write everything down you know about the key word. Check your answer and add information in a different colour if needed.

Quizzes - A fun way to revise is to complete quick quizzes, it definitely helps with recall but should be used alongside other strategies. Good sites are seneca, BBC bitesize, quizlet, kahoot and bloocket.

4

Exam Questions

Now you have embedded your knowledge through active recall, you need to test yourself. The best way to do this is through past exam questions. It is important you test the specific knowledge you have just embedded. Save my exams do questions in topic order or you could find suitable questions on the exam boards past papers, it will just take a little longer to find.

Time yourself.
1 minute per mark and a little extra for reading time.

Set a timer!

Many students loose marks because they do not practice their timings and they run out of time in the exam.

5

Study smarter, not longer.

Short burst of revision are much better than hours on end. I advise to break revision down into an hour which is divided into four sessions, these are called focused fifteen. You really focus for fifteen minutes either using active recall or timed past questions, you then have 5 minutes break. Ensure you put a timer on, so you are not distracted by your phone or keep checking the time.

How many hour burst you do is up to you, personally I would advise, an hour in the morning, afternoon and evening, If you are not on study leave one - two hours is enough.

6

Spaced Recall

When you have completed your revision, embed the same topics 3 days later, 1 week later and one month later or just before your exam. Don't worry if your exam is soon just adjust it slightly. This interrupts our brain forgetting the information, it is a great technique..

Revise the same topic on

Day 1

Day 4

Day 10

Day 40

If exams are fast approaching, adjust slightly or just do 2 or 3 recalls.