

The Thomas Hardy

School

Year 11

Revision guidance for
parents and students.





Dear Parents

At The Thomas Hardy School we recognise the importance of working in partnership with students and parents to secure the best possible outcomes for our students. The next few months represent a crucial stage of your child's education; GCSE exams are imminent and it is imperative that we all work together to maximise attainment.

This booklet contains some information about how you and your child can work in collaboration with the school to make the most of the next few months.

There are also a significant number of lunchtime and after school revision and support sessions which are on offer. We are very fortunate to have dedicated staff who are willing to give their time to run these sessions and we would strongly advise students to take advantage of these opportunities.

We would also like to take the opportunity to thank parents and guardians for their continued support of the school, and to wish all of our Year 11 students the very best of luck with their preparations for the exams in May and June.

If you have any concerns about supporting your child with revision, please contact their college leader or their subject teachers.

Top tips for effective revision

Eat breakfast

It is estimated that around 27% of boys and 39% of girls skip breakfast some or all of the time. Research has found that skipping this meal significantly reduces students' attention and their ability to recall information.

Put your phone away

Phones can be distracting; they are linked to FOMO (fear of missing out), and evidence shows that students who spend more time messaging and using social media get lower grades. In another study, researchers found that the mere sight of a phone was enough to reduce a person's ability to focus. The implication couldn't be clearer: **out of sight really is out of mind.**

Start early and spread it out

Actors don't leave their rehearsals until the day before opening night. Athletes don't only train the day before a match. To commit something to memory takes time. Spreading out your revision sessions on a particular topic (e.g. one-hour sessions over 7 days) is more effective than spending the same amount of time in one go (i.e. 7 hours in one day).

Test yourself

Leading researchers in the field of memory consider testing yourself as one of the most effective ways to improve your ability to recall information. Testing yourself also helps you check for any gaps in your knowledge. Practice papers provide a good starting point, as well as quizzing yourself at the end of your revision session.

Teach someone

After you have tested yourself, teach the material to someone else. This has been found to help aid memory and recall: it is known as "the Protégé Effect". Teaching someone else requires you to learn and organise your knowledge in a clear and structured manner.

Don't listen to music

Students who study in a quiet environment can recall more than those who revise while listening to music. Extroverts, and those with an exceptional ability to control their attention, are not negatively affected as much: but it doesn't help.

Take a break

You cannot work all day, every day. Nor should you. Revision has to be about quality, as well as quantity. Going outside and getting some fresh air helps people feel refreshed and better able to focus afterwards. Furthermore, doing a little bit of exercise helps people deal better with stressful situations.

How parents can help



⇒ Ensure students have somewhere quiet to revise. Help them keep this free of distractions and make sure they have any resources they might need.



⇒ Be the “guardian” of their phone while they revise – this removes the temptation they may have to use it.



⇒ Allow them to teach you about something they have been revising.



⇒ Talk to them about what they’re learning and offer to test them.



⇒ Agree the balance between revision and relaxation in advance, using a revision planner like the one at the back of this booklet.



The best way to support your child during the stress of revision and exams is to make home life as calm and pleasant as possible. It helps if other members of the household are aware that your child may be under pressure and that allowances should be made for this.

Encourage your child to join family meals, even if it's a busy revision day - it's important to have a change of scene and get away from the books and computer for a while.

Try not to nag or make too many demands on your child during exam time. Arguments are counter-productive and will only add unnecessary stress and distract from revision.

It's important to get a good night's sleep before an exam, so discourage your child from staying up late to cram. And make sure he or she eats a good breakfast on the morning of the exam.

Maths and English resources

Corbett Maths

A very useful website for students to access questions relating to all topics in Maths. There is a handy "5-a-day" worksheet with 5 mixed maths questions for every day of the year.

Visit: <https://corbettmaths.com/>

Maths Genie

Similar to Corbett Maths this has revision videos, questions and answers for every topic on the GCSE course.

Visit: <https://www.mathsgenie.co.uk/>

Mr Bruff

Revision videos for GCSE English covering all of the set texts, poetry and advice for the English Language exams.

Visit: <https://www.youtube.com/user/mrbruff>

Other useful resources

Seneca Learning

Students can create an account for free to access online revision guides with in-built tests of their knowledge and understanding. The content is written by subject specialists and is approved by exam boards.

Visit: <http://senecalearning.com>

BBC Bitesize

This is probably one of the most tried and tested online resources for students. It has revision material and short tests for each GCSE subject. Students should be careful to select the correct exam board. They can create a free account to store these details for future revision sessions..

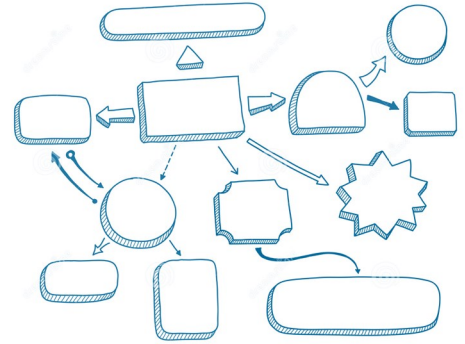
Fast Past Papers!

Using past paper questions is one of the most effective ways of checking your progress with revision. The 'fast past papers' website is a useful tool for tracking down past papers for different exam boards.

Visit: <http://www.fastpastpapers.com/>

Mind Maps

Mind maps help you to organise large amounts of content visually and provide a way of making connections between different 'pieces' of information. There are a few simple tips that you should follow when constructing a mind map:



- Have one central idea in the middle and break this down into around 6-8 (max.) sub-topics.
- Use single words or very short phrases - the mind map should be a summary of key ideas.
- Use different colours for different themes or ideas.
- Try to use pictures/diagrams to represent concepts.

Mind-maps can be really useful for representing broad 'topics' like *photosynthesis* in science or a chapter from a text in English where you could then include important quotes from different characters. It would also be useful for bringing together key ideas for a larger 'case study' in Geography for example.

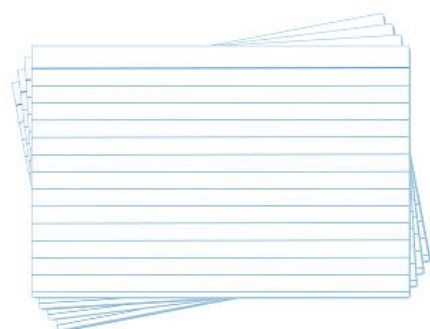
Remember: Making the mind map is only the start of the process. You need to practise re-creating it or testing yourself on remembering some of the key ideas.

Flash Cards

Flash cards are a useful way of breaking down larger topics into small chunks. The idea is that you can create a series of 'flashcards' for a particular topic and then use them to help you remember it. It is important to consider the following things when making/using flash cards:

- Make your own! Sometimes you will find pre-made flashcards on the internet, but the process of making them is an important first step in the revision.
- Use a mixture of text and images - there's a psychological concept called the **Picture Superiority Effect**, which describes how people tend to remember images a lot better than they remember words.
- Write only one question or concept per card. Students often make the mistake of cramming lots of information onto one card. The idea is that they should be focused on quick recall of one idea.
- Break complex concepts into smaller 'chunks'.

The final and most important tip to remember with flashcards is that they only work if you are using them **repeatedly**. Some students make them and then tidy them away in a drawer never to be seen again! You can consider the following things when testing yourself:



- Say the answers out loud.
- Have someone (a parent, sibling, friend) help test you.
- Go over them several times.
- Mix up the order in which you practise them.
- Sometimes start with the answers rather than the questions.

Self-testing

All effective revision involves some element of testing or checking as this is the only way to check whether you are making progress with what you are studying. Rather than thinking of revision as being in the format of: “**Read, Read, Read, Test**”, think about it more like “**Read, Test, Test, Test.**”

There are a number of approaches that can be used to test yourself:

- The “Look, Cover, Check” method where you cover up a piece of text, try to recall a particular point or passage and then check to see if you were correct.
- Online self-testing tools - apps such as Gojimo, Quizlet, etc. allow you to access a range of questions on different GCSE topics or to make your own quizzes.
- Asking a friend or family member to test you.
- Making simple activities, such as having key terms on some slips of paper, and their definitions on other slips of paper. You then have to try and match the terms and definitions together.
 - Past paper questions. These can be accessed online or via your teachers. Some of the short questions may be easy to mark with a mark-scheme, but take them to your teacher for feedback on longer questions.



Remember: If you have nothing to show at the end of your revision then there is little chance that it has been very effective.

Revision Clocks

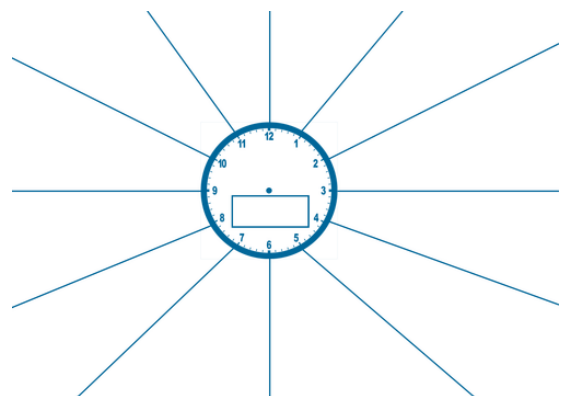
A revision clock allows you to split up a topic into 12 segments and then create a method of revising that content in one hour.

There are a few stages you should go through when making your revision clock, some of which are quite similar to creating a mind-map:

1. Download a template (freely available online) and decide on how your topic could be split into 12 chunks (ask your teacher for advice here if you're unsure)
2. Summarise each of the chunks into one of the sections of your revision clock. Remember to:
 - Be concise - focus on the key ideas, phrases, dates, numbers, etc.
 - Use diagrams or images in place of words.
3. Once you have finished your revision clock, it is time to start using it. You should spend 5 minutes reading through each 'chunk' and then covering it up to try and re-call some of the information.
4. You might find some of these revision clocks pre-made for you on revision websites, but the process of creating them is an important first step, just like it is for flash cards.

You can find some examples of completed revision clocks by looking on Google images.

Remember: Use it regularly for maximum effect



Revision Planners

Below is a set of revision planners, with the first one filled in as an example.

Remember to:

- Spread your revision over the whole week.
- Include after-school activities like Maths/English Club.
- Build in time for other things: Football training, Dance Lessons, Karate, etc.
- Have a larger weighting towards Maths and English – as you have more lessons in these subjects.
- Spend 30-45 minutes revising during each of these slots.

Week Beginning		EXAMPLE!				
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Physics	Geography	Chemistry	Biology	Geography	Maths	Biology
English Club	French	Maths Club	GCSE PE	Physics	Chemistry	GCSE PE
English Club	Textiles	Maths Club	French	Theology	Textiles	English

Week Beginning		17 th February				
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun

Top Tip! Use the revision planners with 3 boxes while you're at school, and the planners with 4 boxes while you're on study leave and during the holidays.

Week Beginning						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun

Week Beginning						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun

Week Beginning						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun

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