

A parents' guide to study and revision skills for GCSEs

Helping your child to achieve their best

How can I make a difference?

“It’s all completely different from when I was at school!”

You don’t have to be an expert in any of the subjects your child chooses to make a real difference. You just need to know how best to spend the time you do have to support your child.

Parental support is one of the most important factors in a child’s success.

You don’t have to become a ‘super parent’ you just need to be supportive..... but you do need to be supportive in particular specific ways





We all know exams are important, but did you know...

Students with 5 GCSEs at grade 4+ including English and Maths are likely to earn £250,000 more in their career than students without the qualifications.

That's a lot of money but it isn't just about the money!

Examinations are the first step to securing virtually any job nowadays and having a job has lots of other benefits including;

- Developing self-confidence and competence
- Having a sense of purpose in life
- Living longer
- Better general health
- Less illness
- Better mental health
- Less stress
- Greater enjoyment of work
- More choice over work

So, passing exams at the highest level they can at this time in their life will help your child throughout the whole of his or her life.

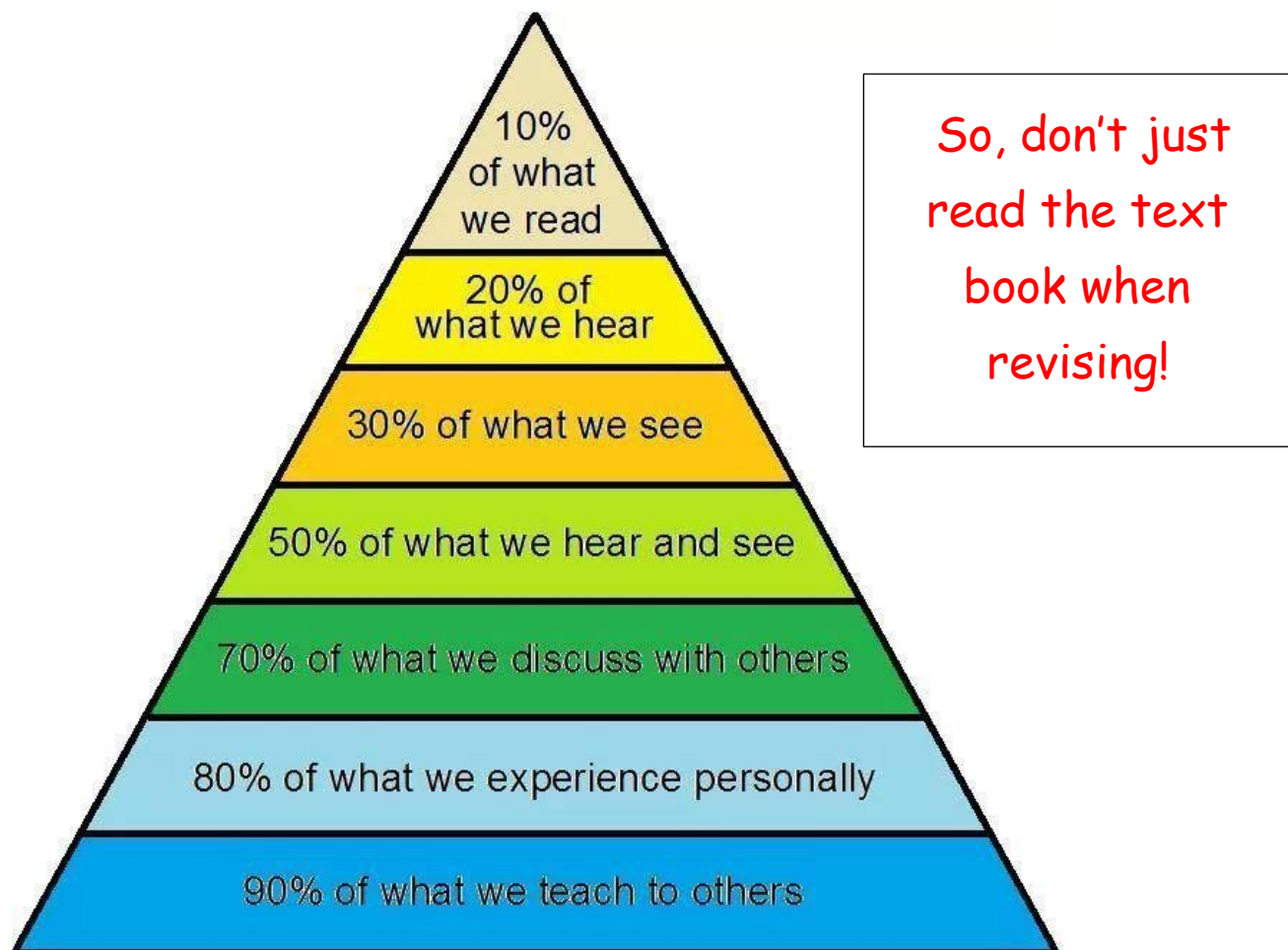
Why do we need to revise?

Your child may be studying 8 or more GCSEs.

Each syllabus will cover a wide range of complex information, concepts and skills and all of this needs to be mastered.

Regular revision is the key to success to build up a depth of knowledge, conceptual understanding and skill that will last a lifetime.

Your teachers will have taught your child first time round, but we don't remember everything. We actually remember;



So, they (and it is your child who needs to do it) need to regularly revise to make sure it is there forever.

The most effective revision technique is teaching something to someone else!

What can go wrong with revision?

- Not doing any
- Leaving it until the last minute
- Not having a plan



- Being too rigid about a plan
- Not being sure what to revise
- Being unrealistic about what can be achieved in the time available
- Revising the right things but in the wrong order
- Revising the right things but in the wrong ways
- Being overwhelmed and so...
 - Not knowing where to start
 - Not starting somewhere because you are overwhelmed
 - Not dealing with stress and losing perspective
- Not making the most of what teachers offer in terms of extra revision sessions

Right mental attitude

Your child needs the right mental attitude to be successful at revision.

Some things to remember are;

- Your child needs to know you will still love them even if they fail..... so that they are not afraid of the risk of failure.
- They need to believe that revision will make a difference (it will).
- They need to believe they can be successful.
- They must start somewhere and actually get started.
- They need encouragement to keep going even if it seems hard.
- They need to know they are not alone in this task and can get help from their teachers and friends and support from you.

Planning Revision

Revision for the summer exams has started!

Your child should produce a revision plan. Lots of people find planning difficult. It is a high-level skill. However, sometimes the planning process is misunderstood.



A plan is not a strait jacket that you need to slavishly follow. A revision plan is your child's way of organising his/her time over a long period and coordinating this revision with other important events e.g. revision classes and exams so that everything is done at the right time.

Your child should expect to re-draft their plan every week and even every day nearer an exam.

Here is a way to use a revision timetable template;

- Plan when social times are first - clubs, evenings off etc
- Identify how many hour slots a week to revise
- Make sure you are realistic and try to stick to what you say you will do
- Split each hour slot into two shorter slots with a break in between
- Reward time spent actually revising - not just time spent organising revision
- Don't forget to put the actual exams on the timetable*



Some tips to share with your child

Revision needs your child to...

- Have a plan
- Be organised
- Revise a little but regularly e.g. each day
- Plan revision of the topics in the right order

When revising....

- Plan to revise specific topics in each subject, not everything at once ☒ Break your material into chunks.
- Many students think revising is simply reading notes or a textbook see the pyramid diagram! I cannot stress this too much...
 - Reading the textbook is not good revision!
 - Reading the textbook is not enough!
 - Reading the textbook is not good revision!
- Break the 40 – 45 mins up into revision activity (30 mins) and testing what you have learned (10 – 15 mins).
- Checking your work correctly gives you FEEDBACK and feedback is another key factor for success.
- Revise for short periods e.g. 40 - 45 mins with a 5-10 min break.
- Stay focused, hours can be easily wasted on social networks and mobile phones.
- In the evenings, plan to revise one or two subjects for one to two hours.
- Leave some time for relaxation every evening.

Don't leave revision to the last minute



Revision Activities

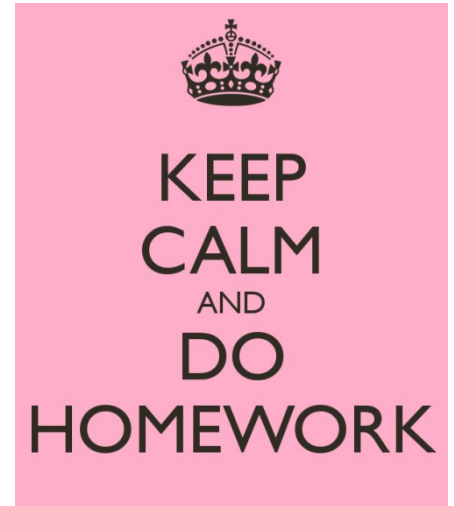
- Do something with the notes from your book or text for each topic e.g.
 - Make your own brief notes for that topic
 - Make a mind map to see how the ideas and knowledge fit together
 - Use flash cards to help remember key information
 - Put revision resources e.g. cards and sheets up on the walls at home
 - Get someone else to test you
 - Explain key ideas to someone who hasn't studied the topic, so they understand it
 - Make up memory aides e.g. mnemonics, acrostics
 - Do short tests
 - Use exam papers
 - Use the mark schemes from exam papers to give you feedback on the detail of right answers.



More tips for parents

Some basics

- Ensure that your son/daughter
 - attends school regularly and punctually
 - completes all Homework
- Show an interest in what they are doing – you don't need to understand it!
- Support your child with revision
- Plan family time e.g. holidays and visits to relatives around their revision not the other way around



Some specifics

- Ensure that your son/daughter
 - gets enough sleep, especially the night before exams
 - is eating sensibly - especially breakfast on exam days.
 - has all the equipment required e.g. pens and sharp pencils, eraser, a ruler, a protractor, a calculator and a watch (mobile phones are not allowed in the exams)
 - has a suitable place to work at home (not in front of the TV)
 - knows what day the exam is on and what time it starts
 - knows how long the exam is
 - knows what is being tested in each exam
- Encourage them to start revising now
- Help your child create a revision timetable from now
- Ask them to explain something they have just revised



How you approach the next few months can have a real **impact** on your child's future. Studies show that high parental interest is linked with better exam results than for children whose parents show no interest.

"It's never too late to be what you might have been."

George Eliot