

Hints for Studying Effectively

Whether you are studying Applied courses or AS/A2 Levels, you must realise the importance of revision prior to sitting your exams.

Techniques which have proven to be effective are outlined below using Geography as an example.

Mind Mapping

This is useful when trying to learn new information or when trying to pull together material from a range of different areas.

For an example of this technique, look at the mind map relating to river erosion below. Start off with the term 'river erosion' in the centre of a piece of paper and ring it. Then perform a personal brainstorm of the major forms of river erosion (abrasion, attrition, etc.) and place these around the edge of the ring, like branches, as shown. Then, from each branch, add points which elaborate upon the initial term, with further subdivisions if necessary. This logical breaking down of the content helps you to assemble the main points that may influence the process of river erosion, and could assist in the writing of an examination answer on the topic.



One problem with mind mapping is that the number of initial branches could become too large, and then lead on to a very complex diagram. You will need to make the end product manageable for you.

Each mind map is very personal to you, and should enable you to remember the key points in a topic and to concentrate on them more quickly.

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Pictorial Notes

Some people have the ability to remember facts according to where they are located on a page of notes – they can be said to have a 'photographic memory'. Others exhibit a variation of this by remembering colours and what facts are contained within different coloured areas of their notes.

Another aspect of this form of revision is to convert written notes into a sketch or picture, and to use this as a revision tool. An example of this would be for you to draw a diagram of an anticyclone with subsiding air, and to add the characteristics of its weather onto it. This would give you a picture of its characteristics, together with descriptive annotations.

Fact Cards

A more traditional way to learn is the fact card approach. Buy a number of small cards from a stationery shop, and write your own summary to the key points of a particular topic onto the cards. One exercise that you could do is to transfer the contents of one A4 sheet of notes onto one card. The card(s) can then be carried around with you for reading during moments when you would otherwise be doing little; for example, when travelling to school or sitting in a common room. Maintain your cards in a logical order using a treasury tag.

Mnemonics and Acronyms

These are 'pegs' on which you can hang specific memories. You can use either letters or words to construct a mnemonic.

One favourite helps you remember the rivers that drain into the River Ouse in Yorkshire:

'Sheffield United never won a cup, did they?' – **SUNWACDT**.

This translates to:

Swale, Ure, Nidd, Wharfe, Aire, Calder, Don, Trent.

Mnemonics where the initial letters make up a word are called acronyms. As with mind maps, the use of these can be, and possibly should be, personal to you.

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System Diagrams

A flow diagram of basin hydrology is an example of a systems diagram. This approach is probably very familiar to you. It records inputs and outputs, and shows movement by means of simple directional arrows.

Try to use this approach to summarise the impacts of demographic changes in urban areas within the UK. The inputs would be specified changes over time, and the outputs would be their effects on the size, type and locations of housing developments.

Skeleton Lists

This is perhaps the most basic of ways to assemble ideas in a logical order before completing the task of writing an answer. Most topics in geography have a list of considerations that can be referred to when looking at factors affecting them.

For example, when considering the location of manufacturing industry, the following may apply:

Physical Factors

Raw materials
Power
Amount of land
Site of factory

Human Factors

Labour
Capital
Markets
Transport
Government policies

These lists provide the skeleton around which a discussion of the location of any manufacturing industry could be constructed.

Source: The Phillip Allan Updates Student Unit Guides

Private and Timetabled Study

Timetabled Study

You must attend each time tabled study session you have been allocated promptly and prepared. Make sure you have an independent task to work on/goal to achieve for each session; bring all the resources required to do this. N.B. be aware that IT may not always be available, so always have a 'back up task you can do without. You cannot use this time to do group work as you will be working in silence during timetabled study; neither will you be able to do group work or work elsewhere during your allocated timetabled study slot. You will be able to use your private study / non-contact time to do this.

Things to do in private study (in addition to specific homework tasks) include:

- Remaking notes taken at speed in the lesson, setting them out under headings
- Reading the relevant section of a textbook
- Learning facts, quotations or vocabulary and testing yourself
- Independent practical work in a computer room or technology area
- Preparing an essay plan or translation
- Researching and making notes for an essay
- Thinking about and refining information
- Drafting, editing, amending, revising and writing up an essay or coursework project
- Wider reading about a topic or related issue
- Listening to foreign language broadcasts, watching a television documentary or scientific report on a topic related to your subject area(s)
- Researching the area covered in greater depth, e.g. Internet/Library

At the end of each day, you should get into the habit of:

- Sorting your bag out!
- File any notes from your 'Day File' into your 'Subject File'. As you do this, re-read them, colour code them etc. to check you understand them. Make revision crib cards as you go along to consolidate information.
- Make a note of any questions / queries you have for your subject staff or coach and plan how and when you will get them answered. Get the LLN e-mail addresses for your coach and subject staff and use them to your advantage.
- Every day spend quality time (minimum of 1 hour - no distractions!) 'going that extra mile'. Read around the topic / text you have just done; Read around the topic / text you are going to do. For example, in English if you are studying the work of a particular poet, research the different styles of poetry they have written; Find out about their motivation; what critics think of their work; Look at past exam questions on their work etc. Make your own notes and show them to your subject staff next lesson.

Use your student planner to keep a check on the work you have to do and when it has to be done by. Ticking off work completed can be very satisfying!

Hints for Revising for Examinations

Dos and Don'ts

- ✗ **Don't** leave all the revision for your examinations until the last moment and replace it with a cramming session.
 - This is inefficient.
 - This is exhausting.
 - This creates tension that reduces effectiveness.
- ✗ **Don't** work all night. Long periods of revision without a break are not effective.
 - You will get very tired.
 - You will learn inefficiently as time goes by.
- ✗ **Don't** "watch" television or have background music on. This is obviously inefficient since it is distracting.
- ✗ **Don't** learn everything you've written. Learn the important points – these need to be selected first.
- ✗ **Don't** skip lessons to revise. Some of the most important revision you will do is with your teacher, who will understand the problems and what is expected in the exam.

- ✓ **Do** plan a revision timetable for the weeks leading up to the examination. **Once worked out – keep to it.** Leave a little slack (spare time) in your revision programme in case something comes up and you miss some of your work.
- ✓ **Do** put a series of **rewards** in your programme to give you a break and an incentive to work hard, e.g. an hour off to watch your favourite TV programme or a break to listen to some music/see your friends, etc.
- ✓ **Do** make sure your programme is designed so that you do not have a very long period without a break and that you do not go on too late into the evening. Get plenty of sleep. This will reduce boredom, increase efficiency and keep you reasonably fresh.
- ✓ **Do** make sure you have some periods of time in your programme to recall the material you've already learned. This will help to keep information in your brain.
- ✓ **Do** find somewhere quiet to revise.
- ✓ **Do** ask your teacher if you are stuck, can't understand something or need advice. Your teacher cannot read your mind.

Exam Words

The words below are often used in exams, such as GCSEs, to ask questions or to tell you what to do. Most of these words are verbs; other parts of speech have been marked. It is important to know the spelling and understand the meanings of these words. Learn the spelling and meaning of these words and find them in your practice exam questions. Highlight these words during your practice exams to help you understand the questions.

analyse	Describe the main ideas; show how they are connected to each other and why they are important.
assess	Find the weak and strong points of the subject in the question.
average	(Noun) the middle: in maths, the average (mean) is found by adding all the numbers together and dividing them by the amount of numbers added, e.g. $26 + 15 + 17 + 6 = 64 / 4 = 16$.
calculate	Find the answer to a problem, usually in maths, using arithmetic or a calculator.
comment on	Say what you think about the subject.
compare	Write about similarities and differences in the subjects.
contrast	Show how the subjects are different.
criticise	Say what you think about the subject, giving your views for and against and backing them up with facts and theories.
define	Give the meaning. Give an example, if you know one, and if you have memorised the definition, then write it down.
describe	Give a detailed account of.
diagram	(Noun) a drawing, chart or graph.
differentiate	Clearly state the differences.
discuss	Describe the subject in detail, and, if there are two sides to the question, give the points for and against.
distinguish	This word is usually followed by 'between'; say clearly what makes the difference between the subjects.
enumerate	List the main ideas by name and number.
essential	(Adjective) most important, must be there.

Exam Words

evaluate	Say what you think about the subject, giving the good and bad points.
evidence	(Noun) facts; proof to back up your answer.
examine	Write what you have to say for and against a subject; state which side you support and give reasons for your support.
explain	Give the reasons for something.
explore	Look into thoroughly and consider from a variety of viewpoints.
express	Often found in maths exams; say in a different way, e.g. express as a fraction.
illustrate	Use examples to make a point clear.
interpret	Give the meaning in your own words using examples, where necessary, to make the meaning clear.
justify	Say why you think that the answer is what it is, and give reasons for why it is that way.
option	(Noun) a choice.
outline	Write about the main ideas; do not go into detail.
pictorial	(Adjective) in a picture.
prove	Show that the answer is true by giving the steps needed to reach it.
purpose	(Noun) the reason why.
relate	Show how things connect; they may be very similar or one may make another act in a certain way.
requirement	(Noun) something which must be done.
review	Give an overall view of the important parts of the subject and your views, backed up by facts when necessary.
state	Write the main points in a brief, clear way.
suggest	Often found in geography exams; using all that you have learned, say what the answer might be.
summarise	Bring together the main points and write about them in a brief, clear way.
trace	Write about the history of a subject, starting at the beginning and following it to the end.

Hints and Tips

Examination Day

- Make sure you have had a good night's sleep before any examination – if you have revised well and know that you are in a position to do your best, then you should sleep well.
- Arrive about fifteen minutes before the exam is due to begin.
- Make sure you go to the toilet before the exam begins.
- Check you have all the equipment necessary for the exam, including two pens, a pencil, a pencil sharpener, a rubber and a ruler.
- Put your watch on the desk in front of you. Check the time and length of the exam and the time it will end at.
- Read the instructions on the exam paper carefully and work out how long you can spend on each question. It is vital to spend time at the beginning of the exam working out how you are going to complete the whole paper.
- Some exams have questions that everyone has to do – attempt these first, then do your best question, followed by your next best, etc. If, before you start, you have a choice of questions, put a tick next to the ones you have decided to do.
- Spend five minutes planning each essay and think carefully about any multiple-choice questions.
- If you are unsure of a question, leave it for later, but make sure you do still attempt it. If you leave a question out then you automatically lose all the marks on it – if you do not write anything, you cannot score anything. Never spend too long on one question – you must answer all the questions you are asked to.
- Check what you have written and how you have written it. Check for factual mistakes, spelling and punctuation. Ask yourself, "Have I answered the question?".
- Always stay until the end of an exam; use any spare time to review your answers and to ensure you have answered the required number of questions.

When the exam is over, think positively – whether you feel you have done well or not, your next exam is another chance to do well, so begin preparation for it and put everything else behind you.

**UNDER EXAM PRESSURE, YOUR
HANDWRITING MAY BECOME ILLEGIBLE**



Career Planning

'Life is either a daring adventure or it is nothing'
Helen Keller

Everyone who enters sixth form has to plan what they will do when they complete their courses. In order to help you with this task you will be able to obtain advice and guidance from your Coach, the post 16 team and Mrs Ahmed. You will also partake in a range of activities during Coaching and Personal Development.

Career Interviews

Those students who are most likely to need an interview in 6th form are:

- Students on courses who are intending to look for employment at the end of the year.
- Students who are considering leaving or changing their present course.

You can arrange a careers appointment with Mrs Ahmed or speak to Mrs Tidman

University Applications

Most students will find information about universities in the Post-16 Study and the common room.

You will be guided through the whole process of applying to university during Coaching, Personal Development and Curriculum Enhancement activities



