

# St Marylebone School – A Guide to Revision

## What is revision?

Revision means literally ‘re-looking’ at information you have learnt previously. The aim of revision is to ensure you know the information that you will be tested on, and you can remember it for the exam. *Knowing* the information involves *understanding* the information.



Nine subjects? Two years of work? How in hell am I goin to remember all that?

**Worried about losing your hair like Homer? It won't be simple. But..... if you follow this guide carefully, it will make everything a lot easier...**

### The four point plan for getting revision right: **VOBE**

- 1) **Variety** – vary your revision strategies
- 2) **Organisation** – organise and plan your time carefully
- 3) **Bitesize** – break up big ‘chunks’ into smaller pieces
- 4) **Environment** – Create an environment that helps you to learn

## 1) **Variety** – vary your revision strategies

**This is the key** to effective revision. Firstly, you need to be ‘doing something’ with all this information if you are going to be able to learn and remember it. It must be **ACTIVE** learning, not just reading and re-reading notes! Secondly, a **variety** of strategies are essential to allow your brain to engage and make connections with your information.

*Your brain is not a machine! Do anything over and over again and it will get bored! Treat your brain more like a puppy... it will be excited and energetic, so long as you find a range of ways to keep it engaged!*

**Some strategies you might find useful..... see which ones work best for you!**

*Spider diagrams/ brainstorm*

*Pictures/ cartoons/ posters*

*Recording yourself making key points*

*Note-taking from notes*

*Using revision guides*

*Flashcards – reducing your notes to fit on small cards*

*Test yourself with friends/ family*

*Acronyms (V.O.B.E)*

*Mnemonics (Richard Of York...) Make up a silly sentence to help you remember*

*Songs, lyrics, raps to remember key concepts and ideas*

*Post-it notes with key ideas around room and house*

*Key word/ formulae/verb endings/ vocab on posters/cards*

*Make tests to test yourself*

*Picture stories – think of a strong visual image to associate with words or facts*



**Reading through your notes is not enough! You will be far more efficient if you employ these strategies!**

## 2) Organisation – organise and plan your time carefully

Many people are scared of this. Many of you will think you are never going to be an organised person. Don't feel like you're alone; we have all felt like this. But it is **so so** important. **You must plan your time and your revision otherwise your revision will seriously suffer.**

### Tips:

- Buy a set of files for each subject, especially for revision.
- For each exam, try to reduce all your notes down to one side of A4. You can return to this again and again in the lead up to the exam
- Start early. You should try to get information from your short term memory to your long term.

### The Revision Timetable (you will be lost without this!)

	1700-1800	1800-1900	1900-2000	2000-2100	2100-2200
MON:	Rehearsal	MAKE REVISION TIMETABLE		COLOUR IN TIMETABLE	Biology Revision
TUE:	Biology Extra Class??	DEUS EX	GENERAL STUDIES: Read Cahon & Hobbes	Biology - Q&A	Rest Session
WED:	Rehearsal	Collect sat 486!	KTAB	ESSAY: Simons (the)	Science
THUR:	File notes on Aquinas	Revise Bismark Sec, etc.	ESSAY FOR R.S.	Revise SKILL MISSIONS	Make Excuse for Biol Result
FRI:	ARTS & DEBATING Soc.	Duch. of @ new	Matf: Vic!!	Make excuse for result	Mission on Telly

Here is our 6 point plan for this. It is worth setting aside a bit of time to do this well. It must be realistic, and you must try and keep to it. The more time you spend on doing it well, the better

1) **Topics** Make a list of topics you need to study for each subject. *Therefore your revision sessions will not simply be 'Science' or 'English', they will be 'English - Poetry Anthology' and 'Science Biology1B'*

2) **Short bursts** The most effective revision takes place at the beginning and end of sessions. So don't revise for 2 hours solid. Adopt patterns like the following:-

*Revise for 45 minutes*

*Break for 15 minutes*

*Revise for 45 minutes*

*Break for 15 minutes*

*Revise for 45 minutes*

*Break for lunch*

"45 minutes solid revision is better than 3 hours of daydreaming....."

3) **Rewards.** Have you built these into your timetable? TV? Biscuit? Facebook? Nintendo Wii? Use these as rewards, not distractions!

4) **Follow-ups.** Research that you should follow up revision sessions the next night and the next week (short term memory to long term memory). For example:-

*Tuesday Revise Science topic for 1 hour.*

*Wednesday Recap same Science topic for 30 minutes.*

*One week later Recap same Science topic for 10 minutes.*

5) **Testing yourself.** It might seem like a drag, but you **must** do this. Try creating mini-tests for yourself, and always practice old exam qs.

6) **Prioritising.** Pay close attention to when your exams will be this summer so you can properly organise your time. For example:

*Monday: History exam      Tuesday: English exam*

Don't spend **all** weekend on History..... you need to balance your time between the two!

## 3) Bitesize – break up big 'chunks' into smaller pieces

This is one of the key aims of revision. You are trying to pack an ensure two year's worth of information for every subject into a month or two of revision – this isn't really possible! Instead, you need to streamline all that information into a series of key points. Then once you encounter this in the exam, going through this process will mean your memory will be triggered.



**Make sure it's bitesize. Not like this numpety...**



### How on earth do I go about doing this?

Think of it as 'Minimising' each topic (re-taking your notes, making them smaller each time)

Take your notes for a topic, and try to simplify them so they only take half as many pages. Then do it again. And again. Each time, break up the notes into a more simplified version: Key words, key ideas, key examples. You should aim to finish with a side of A4 for each topic. Then you can break this down further into flashcards, posters, mindmaps or pictures if you wish, and return to these simplified versions as and when you need to.

## 4) Environment – Create an environment that helps you to learn

This is really important – to revise well your brain needs the right conditions. And you can actually make the places you work and live in (bedroom, kitchen, lounge) into a 'learning environment' that will help you revise without you even knowing it!

### The basics:

- Keep your work space clear and uncluttered
- Use files to keep your notes for each subject in order
- Have all your equipment to hand
- Make sure there are no distractions. Some people work better with music.... a lot of us don't, so don't kid yourself about this!
- **TV, facebook, Wii, internet, mobile phones** – these have the potential to ruin a revision session. Keep them away. Your will power is not enough to get you through!



### Creating a Learning Environment:

- Have your revision timetable up in your room, and elsewhere if you can.... it is a vital tool!
- Create visual stimuli all around you... post-it notes on fridges, posters in bedrooms, key words on doors in your house. You will be learning without even realising!
- Use different colour paper, pens and highlighters to make your work look more interesting
- Use your family and friends to test you on things on the way to school
- Change your computer screensaver to a keyword/equation/ concept
- Create a calendar with a different key word on for each day

## Your Final Top Ten Tips

1. Make yourself start, no matter how much you don't want to. The hardest bit is over then!
2. Build in breaks and rewards.
3. Do frequent exercise: stretches, walking around, shoulder rolls (maybe even some boxercise!). Staying active keeps your brain going and helps you concentrate
4. Drink water and get fresh air
5. Eat 'brain food' (cereals, nuts, fruits, salads). Sugary foods will get you going for 10 minutes and then you will fade away.
6. Take a day off and do something completely different
7. Don't leave the difficult bits until the end!
8. Do something relaxing between revision and bedtime
9. Stop and take a break if you feel frustrated, angry or overwhelmed. Make a note of the problem and take it to your next lesson
10. Focus on what you **have** done, not on what you haven't!
11. Don't be influenced by your friends about how little, or how much, revision they have done. Keep your head down – your results don't matter to them, but they matter to you! Tell yourself it's not for long, and look forward to the summer holidays!