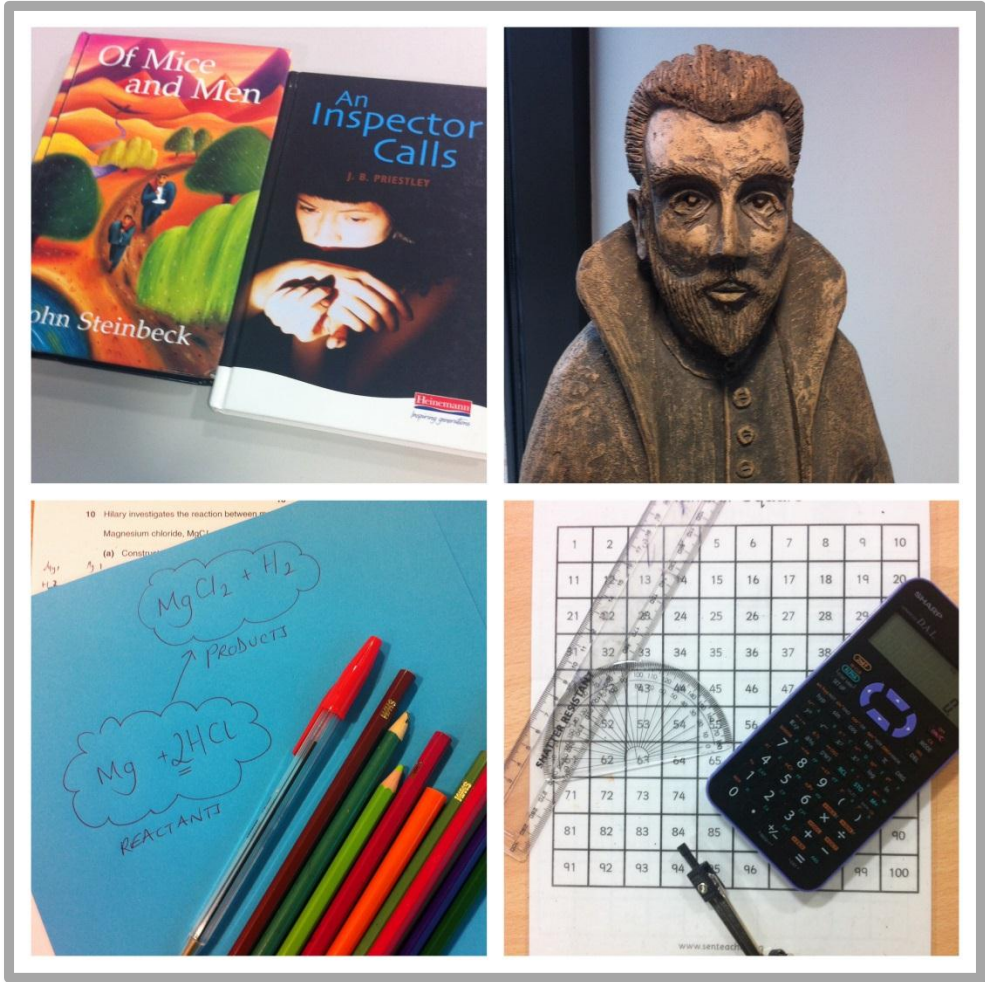


# Study Skills



St Edmund's Learning Campaign

# Introduction

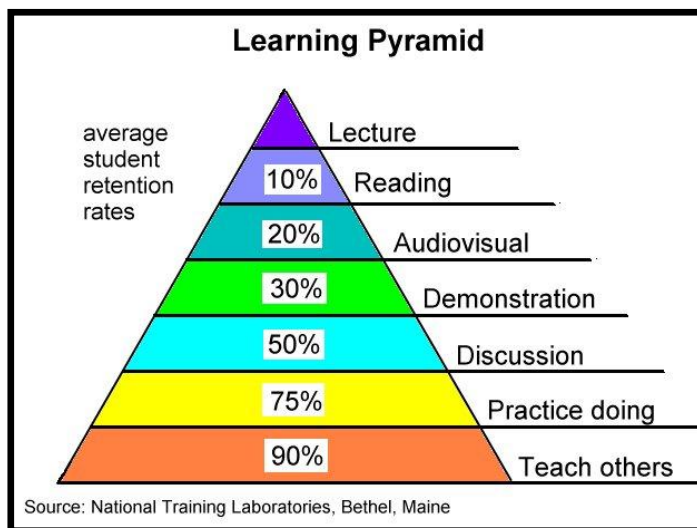
Study skills are crucial to effective exam preparation. There are lots of tried and tested techniques and you need to figure out what works best for you.

The two most effective strategies according to recent studies are testing yourself and spreading out your revision over time.

There are a variety of ways to learn the information before you get to the critical testing stage.

## What Works

It is worth noting something that has been proven countless times; just reading your notes has very little impact on long term effective revision.



To maximise your chances of doing well, strategies such as teaching others, practising exam questions and talking about the ideas will be most effective.

# Brain Basics

Metacognition in its simplest form is about understanding how you think and learn. The process of thinking about thinking. A little background on how our brains work can help you develop better revision (and learning) strategies and techniques.

The brain is made up of neurons, billions and billions of them. Neurons link to each other, each one connecting to tens of thousands of other neurons. When we learn something new we make a new connection. That is the hardest part. Once the connection is made you can strengthen the connection by using it frequently. So in short, every time you review your learning, you make it easier to access in your memory by making the connections stronger and quicker.



Naturally we develop stronger connections when things are more interesting to us, personal, unusual, funny; that is why some things are naturally more memorable than others.

# Piece It Together

Consider your learning as a journey having 4 stepping stones. Each one is needed to complete the journey, they are all equally important and they rely on each other to complete the path.

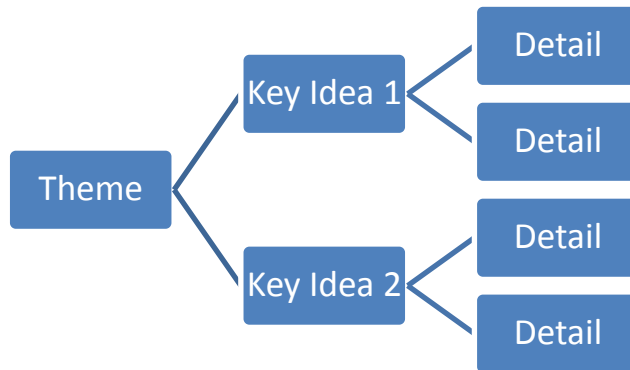
These stepping stones are:

- ➡ Get it - understanding
- ➡ Shrink it - breaking down and simplifying
- ➡ Learn it – memorising and recalling
- ➡ Check it – reviewing and testing

# Get It

Ensuring you understand the work as it is taught is the first step to success here. Do this by asking questions of your teacher and yourself.

When you have finished a topic or unit of learning ask yourself to summarise it into:

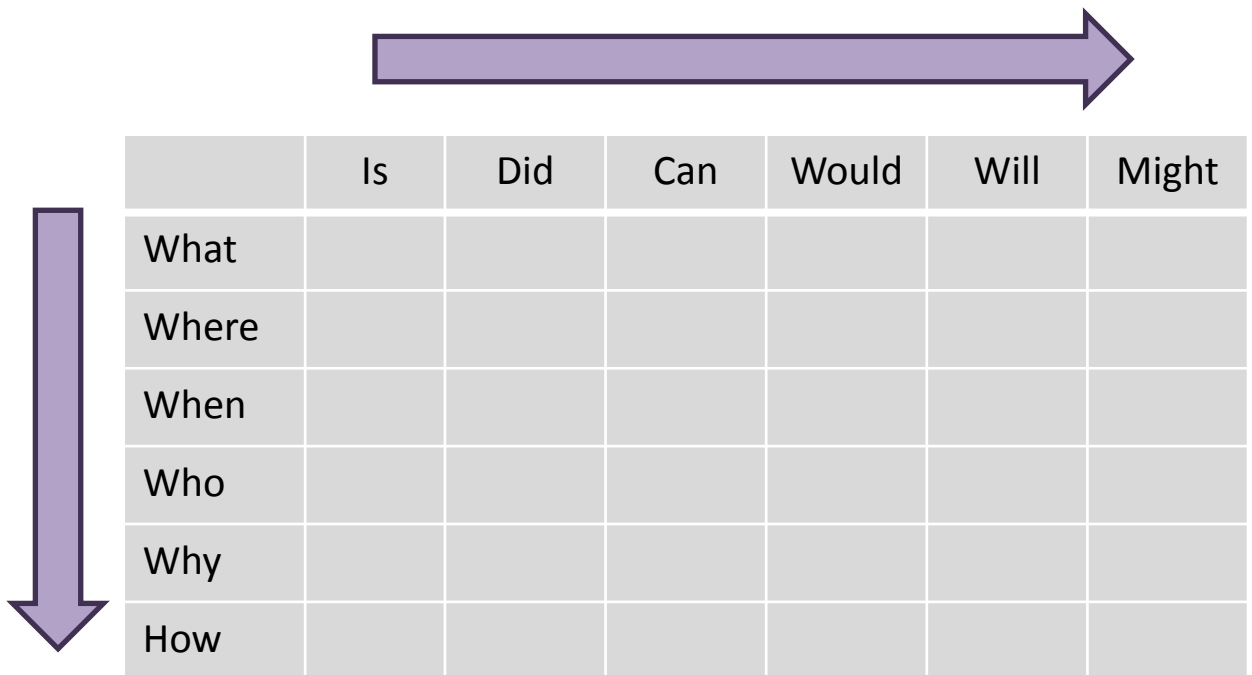


- The theme is the main point. What you would say if you summarised it in one sentence.
- Key ideas are smaller themes. Often repeated or connected to each other. They give an overview of the learning.
- Details are the bits that bind everything and create a very specific picture.

# Get It

Asking questions to structure your thinking helps when trying to understand a new concept. It is a way of looking at it from a variety of angles. It is a good way to remember all of the details which are often easiest to forget.

Using a question matrix like this one might help:



The diagram shows a question matrix with a horizontal arrow pointing right above it and a vertical arrow pointing down to its left. The matrix is a 7x7 grid. The columns are labeled 'Is', 'Did', 'Can', 'Would', 'Will', and 'Might'. The rows are labeled 'What', 'Where', 'When', 'Who', 'Why', and 'How'. The top-left cell is empty.

	Is	Did	Can	Would	Will	Might
What						
Where						
When						
Who						
Why						
How						

The level of difficulty of the questions increases as shown by the arrow.

# Shrink It

Once you have a good general understanding of a topic or idea you can summarise the key points.

Summaries can be done in many different ways and are a way of listing only the really important information without all of the connecting words we no longer need. Around 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the text you read contains real meaning.

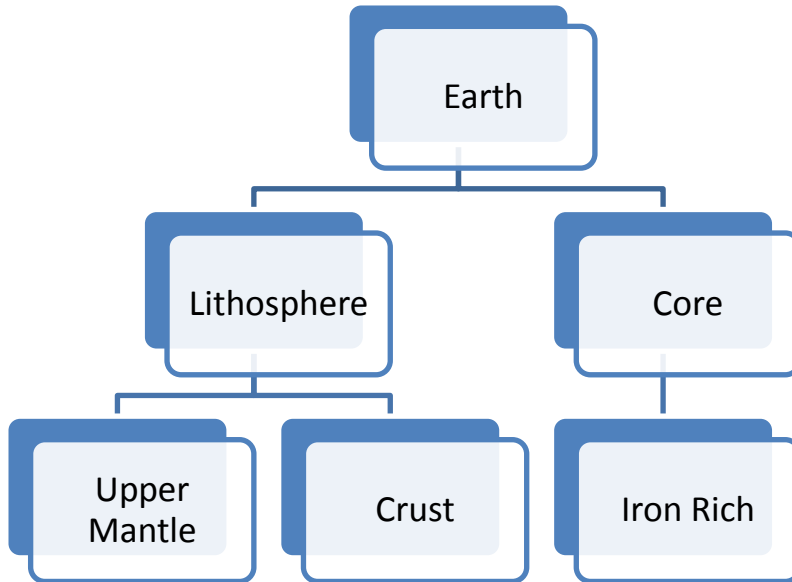
When we summarise we use only the trigger words, words that prompt recall of a whole idea.

## Bullet Point Lists:

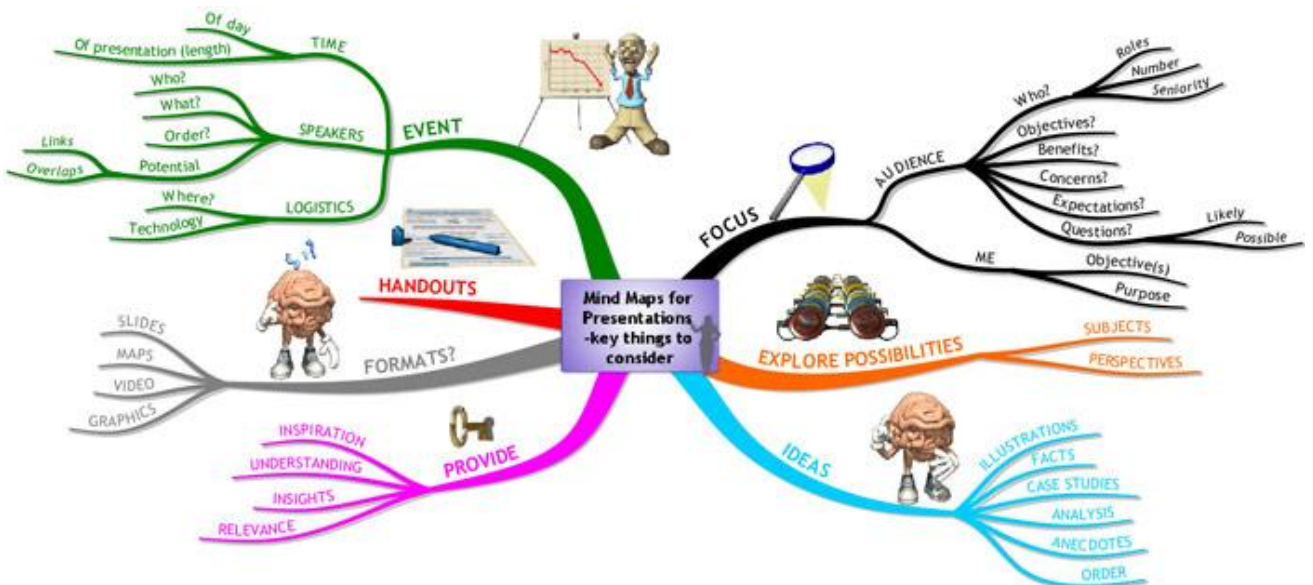
- **Earth**
  - **Core**
  - **Mantle**
  - **Crust**
  - **Upper Mantle + Crust = Lithosphere**
    - **Subduction**
      - **Oceanic plate - dense**
      - **Continental plate – less dense**
      - **Collide**
      - **Oceanic sinks**

# Shrink It

## Flow Charts:



## Mindmaps © Tony Buzan



<http://www.mind-mapping.co.uk/mind-maps-examples.htm>



# Shrink It

## Making a good Mindmap

- Be creative
- Use images to replace words
- Use colour as a tool - could separate concepts
- Line weighting - could represent importance
- Add in links between ideas
- Never over simplify, add enough to get the message across. As with everything practise is needed here.

Mindmaps can be used to plan and record as well as to summarise. They are an excellent tool because they allow you to see how ideas link together and find connections you would not see by just reading a book.

## Padlet

<http://padlet.com/is> a useful resource to make revision tools too.

# Shrink It

## Making Flashcards

- ☑ Colour - having different coloured card and pens for different topics helps the brain find the information more easily.
- ☑ Make it light – Never cram too much onto one card.
- ☑ Images – drawn or cut out. Pictures can summarise something a hundred words may have been needed to say.
- ☑ Size – pocket size is perfect. Make them something that can travel around; this way you can make very effective use of ‘dead time’. (This is the time when you are waiting for the bus/ in the car on your way to footie training....)
- ☑ Organising them – hole punch one corner and add a plastic cable tie, this will make them easy to flip over and carry around.
- ☑ Testing yourself –have the back of the cards/ separate cards with questions on to test yourself. Answers could covered with a sticky note. This way family and friends can do the testing too.
- ☑ Keep them safe –Consider photocopying them or scanning them into the computer to have a backup copy. Just in case...

# Learn It

The fantastic thing about memory is that it gets better with practise. Nobody has a bad memory; just one which has not been put to use enough.

## There are 6 memory keys.

You are more likely to remember things that are:

- Outstanding – maybe they are repeated, unusual, colourful
- Funny
- Personal
- Emotional
- Linked to senses
- The first and last things you learn - this is known as the primacy and recency effect

Remember the pyramid on page 1? Once you have made your mindmaps, flashcards, flow charts or bullet point lists, read them, discuss them and use them to teach others...even if it's the dog!

# Learn It

Sometimes we have to learn basic facts. Simple factual recall that you must learn by heart. Some techniques to help with this type of learning are:

- ☑ **Mnemonics**
- ☑ **Story chains**
- ☑ **Sing it**
- ☑ **Memory pegs**

## ☑ Mnemonics

Old mnemonics you might remember are Never Eat Shredded Wheat for the compass North East South West or to spell the word because – big elephants can always upset small elephants.

Simply take the first letter of each item you wish to remember (in order) and create a sentence or story. This can make it easier for you to recall, especially if the sentence or story has been made using the 6 memory keys.

# Learn It

## Story chains

This time instead of using the first letters as triggers you use the whole words but associate them in a story. Remembering the words goat, folder, shoe, grass. Create an imaginative story that is funny to you. Maybe a goat ran over to you at the farm and started eating your work folder. You took off your shoe to chuck at him but as you did you slipped on the grass.

The good thing about story chains is that you don't have to draw them or write them; it's just you and your imagination.

## Sing it

It doesn't matter how awful it is, actually the more awful the better, who can forget the electromagnetic spectrum song?

Putting things you need to remember to songs you love, or hate, is a sure way to remember them.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjOGNVH3D4Y>

# Learn It

## Memory pegs

If you need to remember exactly where an item is within a list and recall items in order then memory pegs may work.

Each number is associated with an item which rhymes with it. You can decide on the words but maybe:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Bun	Shoe	Tree	Door	Hive	Bricks	Heav- en	Gate	Wine	Den

Then “peg” each item in your list to the corresponding word. It sounds complicated but once you get the hang of it, it is quite easy.

For example remembering these items in order goat, folder, bag, grass..... think of a goat eating a bun, a folder with a shoe on it, a bag trapped in a tree, a door covered in grass.

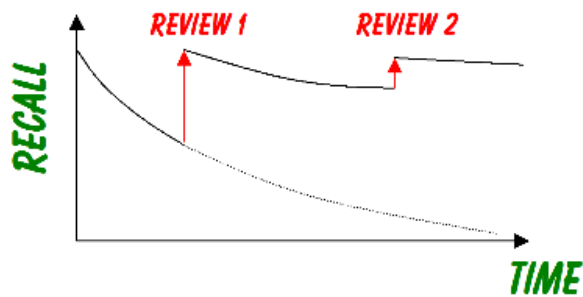
Now when you recall them out of order... remember the bag in the tree, it's number three. A bit like bingo!

You could also do it with the alphabet and have an image for each letter, A is for apple, B is for ball and so on.

# Check It

Like everything, the more often we use it the more likely we are to remember it. Revision and memory are no different. When you review the work you have covered, your brain makes connections between the learning. Next time you access this information it makes the connections stronger; it is also quicker to 'find' and access the information.

Simply reviewing the information the same evening, after one day, one week and then on a regular basis, maybe monthly, will allow long term recall of topics and ideas. The great thing is that once you have invested a good 10-15 minutes reviewing it the first time, the other reviews only need to be, at a maximum, 5 minutes long.



## So how do you review?

It is as easy as look at it then test yourself. You have already done all of the hard work. You have asked yourself and your teacher questions to strengthen your understanding, you have read it, got it, summarised and shrunk it, you have learnt it... now you just need to read those flash cards or mindmaps and test yourself.

# Check It

## Testing

It is always best to have variety. Testing yourself could be redrawing your mindmap, summarising on paper the notes on your flash card, talking aloud (to someone else or just yourself). You could even record yourself to check what you missed out.

There is also no substitute for completing and marking real past paper exam questions. As well as being able to recall the learning and understand the ideas, you need to be able to articulate yourself well. Doing practise exam questions and then marking them (honestly!) using the mark schemes lets you see the key words that examiners are looking for. It also helps you to understand what examiners are looking for when they ask questions in a certain way.

Often these types of question can be found on the website of the exam board you are studying. Ask your teacher or check your exam entries form if you are not sure which exam board you are taking. It is very important to use the exam questions that match the course and specification you are studying.



# Exam Preparation - Where to Revise

## At a desk or table

- Preferably one you can leave all your things on when you are doing other things. One you can spread yourself out over.

## With a comfortable chair

- Don't slouch over a desk or computer screen. Sit comfortably.

## Somewhere warm

- If you're not moving around it is very easy to get chilly so make sure you have a blanket to hand or turn the heating up.

## Well lit with some fresh air

- Good for the body, good for the brain.

## NO TV NO Social media...

- We know that we only intend to check the football score, see what our friends were up to last night on Facebook or check a couple of photographs on Instagram BUT it is never ever just a minute.
- You have to be ruthless. If you know you will lose yourself in the internet or your phone, switch it off, leave it in a drawer, lock it away and give your mum the key. There are even Apps you can download to block yourself from accessing certain sites for a specific time frame.

# Study Timetable

	Time	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Time	Sat	Sun
	Before School								
	School Day								
	After School								

# Study Timetable

Start by putting in times that work for you. If you don't get in until 4.30, there is no point writing in a 4-5 slot!

Cross out any times that can't be done on particular days for example if you do karate on Wednesday nights cross that section off.

Make a list of all of the subjects you need to revise for. (It is useful to have a list of all of the exam dates too.) Put the subjects into your timetable; spread them out so you get a nice balance each evening and balance across the week. You could pick a more practical subject and pair it with a more essay based subject for one evening, a subject you like to do after the subject you don't like so much. If you are planning a timetable very early remember to leave spaces for homework.

Make sure to schedule in some PT, some personal time; do whatever you like in these times as long as your mind is off revision. You still need to stick to the times for PT, an hour can easily become four when we are exposed to Xbox time!

You should plan on taking a mini break every 40 minutes. Only for 5 minutes. You should get up, move around, do something different for a few minutes. Have a larger break every 2-3 sessions. Remember the memory keys. We remember beginnings and endings more than middles, so it stands to reason that if we have regular mini breaks we will remember more.

# Exam Preparation

## Getting Ready for the Exam

- Don't revise until late
- Prepare and pack all of your things for the exam the night before
- An hour before bed switch to doing something for yourself, preferably not watching TV or computing
- Go to bed early
- Get up in plenty of time
- Eat breakfast – even if you don't want to
- Keep thinking positive thoughts
- Leave early
- Surround yourself with positive people or no people at all
- Review a few last minute facts if you want to
- Put all your revision away 10 minutes before you need to be at the exam hall
- Breathe deep, stay calm and smile

# Exam Preparation

## Know what the questions are asking

Be sure that you are familiar with all of these command words and what they mean. They are very often used to frame exam questions:

- Adapt
- Analyse
- Calculate
- Carry out
- Collect
- Communicate
- Compare
- Conduct
- Contrast
- Create
- Demonstrate
- Define
- Describe
- Design
- Determine
- Develop
- Discuss
- Display
- Estimate
- Evaluate
- Examine
- Explore
- Give
- Identify
- Illustrate
- Implement
- Interpret
- Justify
- Measure
- Name
- Obtain
- Outline
- Participate
- Perform
- Plan
- Predict
- Present
- Process
- Produce
- Promote
- Recommend
- Reflect
- Report
- Research
- Review
- Set up
- State
- Suggest
- Summarise

# Stress Busting

We have a tendency to blow things out of proportion when we are stressed. It is important to maintain perspective.

Remember these 3 things:

- What is the worst that can happen? (Not as bad as you think)
- How likely is it to happen? (Not that likely at all)
- How will you cope if it does happen? (You'll be able to cope with it better than you think you will)

## Strategies

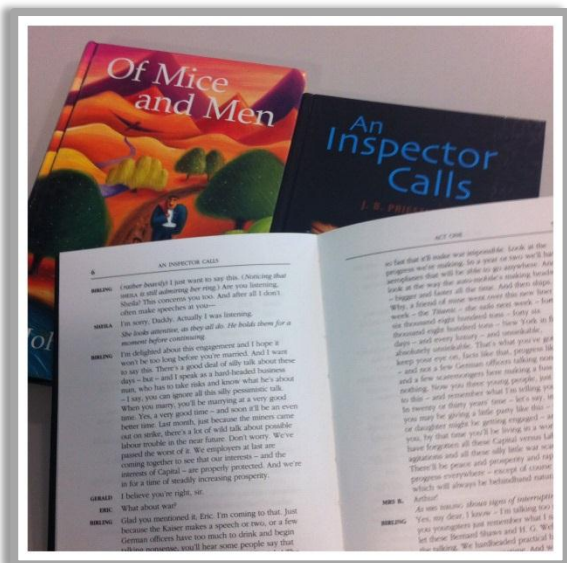
Different things will work for different people but here are some things to think about:

- Eat and drink well
- Breathing techniques – In for three, hold for three, out for five.
- Relaxation - Meditation Apps could be useful. Calming music. Peace and quiet.
- Exercise – Go for a run a swim or a kick about. Exercise naturally calms and relaxes. Planning it into your revision timetable would be even better.
- Ask for help – there are lots of people, internet sites and books written by people who have had the same problems that you are having. It isn't a sign of weakness to ask for help.

# English

Past papers and mark schemes for English / English Language Unit 1 (Understanding and Producing Non-Fiction Texts) can be found at:

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-4700/past-papers-and-mark-schemes>



Past papers and mark schemes for English Literature Unit 1 (*An Inspector Calls* and *Of Mice and Men*) and Unit 2 (Conflict Poetry and Unseen Poetry) can be found at:

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-literature-9710/past-papers-and-mark-schemes>

## Websites

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/english/>  
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/english\\_literature/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/english_literature/)  
<https://www.samlearning.com/>

## PE

Follow @pestedmunds on twitter for links to revision questions and videos.

## Websites

<http://www.mypeexam.com/#!/gcse-pe/cl15>



# Maths

Past exam papers have been uploaded to realsmart.  
Edexcel past paper App for Andriod and ios - search for Mathematics A from 2010.

## Websites

[www.mymaths.co.uk](http://www.mymaths.co.uk)

- use puffin academy free app!

<http://maths-it.org.uk/Podcasts/> - podcasts

[www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize) - search KS4 maths

[mathsmadeeasy.co.uk](http://mathsmadeeasy.co.uk).

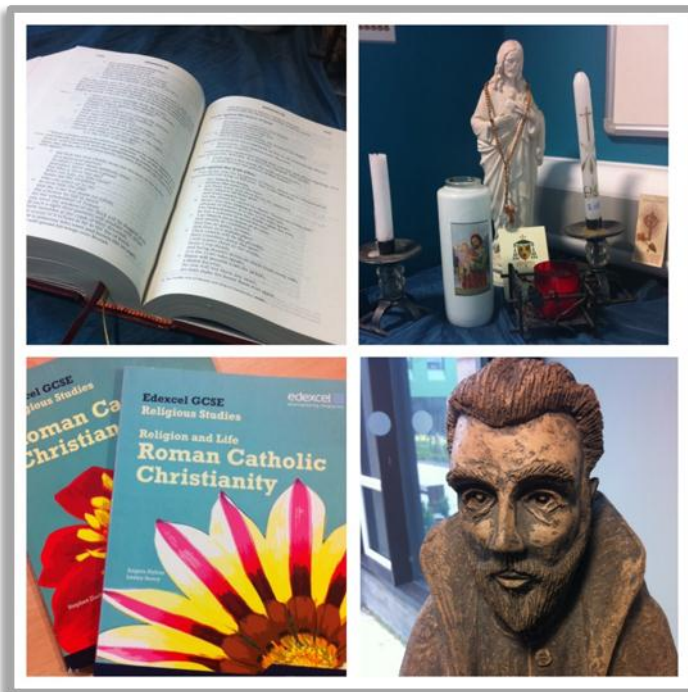


# RE

Revision Guides and past papers have already been given to you.

Ensure that you are familiar with the key word glossaries that are in the revision guides as these are often used to form the questions in exams.

There are quick quizzes on realsmart specific to each topic.





# Science

A Collins revision guide, appropriate to the exam you are taking has already been issued to you, it contains levelled worksheets with answers.

Collins online textbook - [www.CollinsOnlineLearning.co.uk](http://www.CollinsOnlineLearning.co.uk)

School Name: St Edmunds Catholic School

Pupil Username: 304

Pupil Password: kt62

SAM Learning - [www.samlearning.com](http://www.samlearning.com) (See Mr Jones if you've lost your log in)

## Past papers

### SCIENCE

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse-gateway-science-suite-science-b-j261-from-2012/>

### ADDITIONAL SCIENCE

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse-gateway-science-suite-additional-science-b-j262-from-2012/>

### BIOLOGY

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse-gateway-science-suite-biology-b-j263-from-2012/>

### CHEMISTRY

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse-gateway-science-suite-chemistry-b-j264-from-2012/>

### PHYSICS

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse-gateway-science-suite-physics-b-j265-from-2012/>



### Other Websites

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/science/>

<https://sites.google.com/site/explorestemitsawesome/ks4>

# History

Revision guides have already been given to you. In order to succeed in GCSE History papers you will need to be able to give a clear account of your own opinions and an interpretation of the opinions of others.

You will need a clear conceptual understanding of the following:

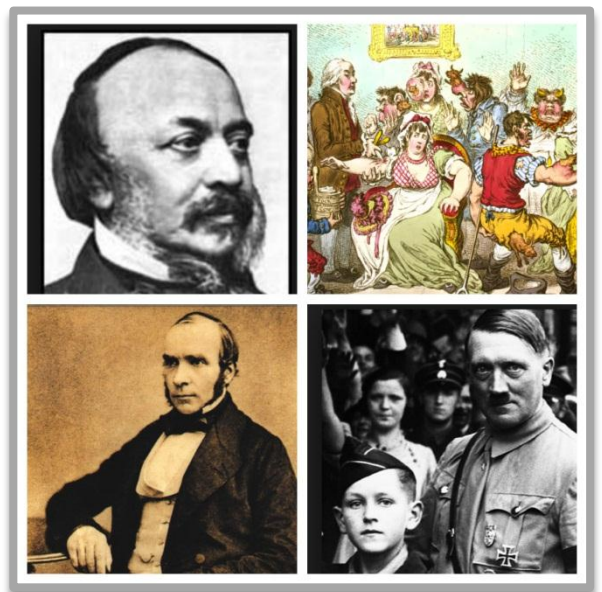
## Medicine

- Chronology and the periods in History.
- The family of concepts linked to change. - Change, continuity, progress, regress, and the Factors of Change. These are essential to understanding why change occurs and why it doesn't at particular moments in history
- Source evaluation skills - Understanding of motive, bias, utility (usefulness), reliability, provenance proof, and support. A critical understanding of these issues underpins the work of all historians.

## Germany 1919-1945

To be able to summarise the relevance and importance of named:

- Key people
- Key events
- Key facts and ideas



# History

## Websites:

<http://www.schoolhistory.co.uk/revision/medicine.shtml>  
<http://www.toothillschool.co.uk/html/deptpage.asp?d=hist&p=gcserev>  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/history/shp/>  
<http://www.johndclare.net/>  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/history/shp/>  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/worcesterjonny>

# ICT

Past exam papers have been uploaded to google drive and given to you.

Revision books and work books have been issued:

- Revise Edexcel GCSE ICT Revision Guide Pearson ISBN 978144690387
- Revise Edexcel GCSE ICT Revision workbook Pearson ISBN 9781446903896
- You could buy GCSE ICT Information & Communication Technology complete revision and practice ISBN 978 84762 179 5 £10.99

## Websites

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/ict/>  
<http://www.reviseict.co.uk/revision/>  
<http://www.school-resources.co.uk/GCSEITRevisionQuizzes.htm>  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/ict/>  
<http://www.ictgcse.org.uk/>

# MFL

Controlled Writing: - make sure you have completed all your written work.

Controlled Speaking: - any assessments need redoing?

EXPO textbook on VLE– the textbook at your fingertips: topics, vocab and grammar. Each Unit has to be opened and saved temporarily while you use it

MFL website – GCSE reading and listening papers with soundtrack and answers. Try as many of these as you are able. Very useful when you are working at home.

Past Papers: listening and reading papers at Foundation and Higher Levels

## What and how to revise

Try to learn more vocab: basic vocab can be practised using Linguascope and Linguastars. (use the vocab booklets you were given in Year 10)

Practice past papers: you have samples of these from class.

On the St Edmund's MFL website there are sound files & scripts, papers and answers for you to use. (listen to MP3 and read the script to develop listening skills)

Revision guide - this has listening tasks that you can access online as well as topic based revision and mini tests. Still available from staff £3

# MFL

## Websites:

[www.linguascope.co.uk](http://www.linguascope.co.uk) great for basic revision  
[www.linguastars.co.uk](http://www.linguastars.co.uk) every topic has animated GCSE role plays with words!! FABULOUS !!!! 😊

username = edmundmfl password = champion

[www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/french](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/french) - some useful tasks, instant marking

[www.languagesonline.org.uk](http://www.languagesonline.org.uk)

[www.mflsunderland.co.uk](http://www.mflsunderland.co.uk)

[www.s-cool.co.uk](http://www.s-cool.co.uk)

[www.rgshw.com/LanguagesOnline](http://www.rgshw.com/LanguagesOnline)

[www.zut.org](http://www.zut.org) - free access between 4pm and 8am – interactive tasks

# Geography

You have had the chance to buy revision guides if you still want to purchase one see Mr Petrie.

You have been given the past four years of exam papers, with resources and mark schemes and they are all on the students shared area for you to access as well.

## Websites:

<http://geobytesgcse.blogspot.co.uk/>

[www.coolgeography.co.uk](http://www.coolgeography.co.uk)

# Music

You have a revision guide that has been lent out to you.

Attached is the 'spider diagram' for you to complete for revision on musical features of specific styles, copies have been given to you.

REVISION TIP: Never revise a style of music without listening to it. You have to relate the facts you learn to the music you hear.

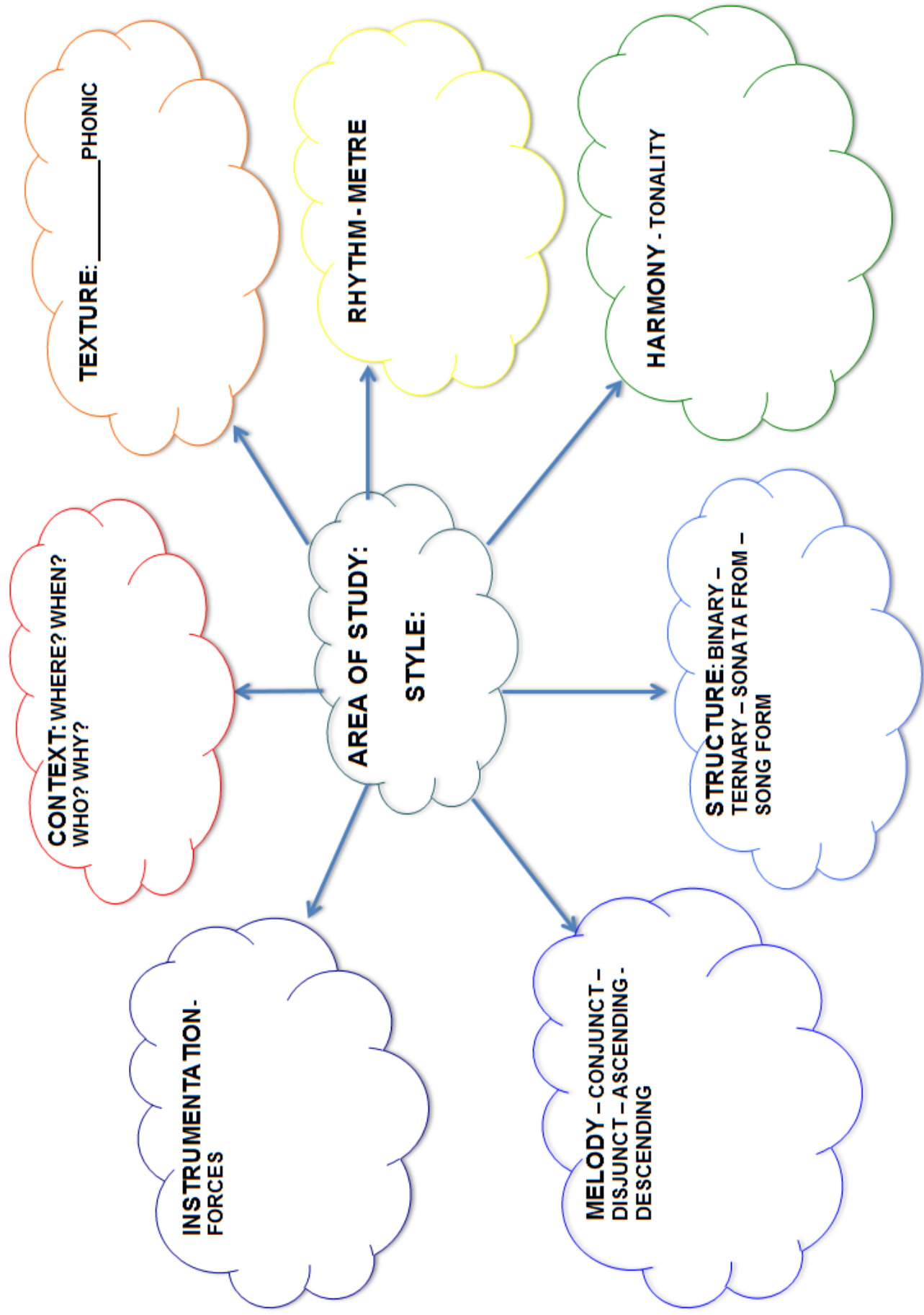
## Websites:

BBC Bitesize is always useful

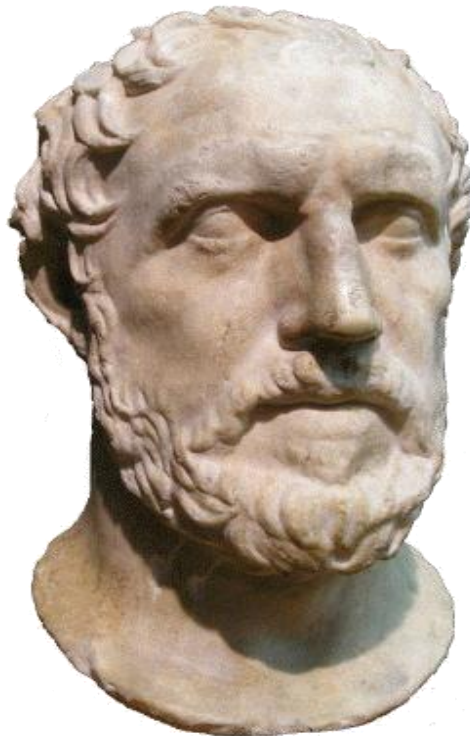
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/music/>

OCR GCSE Music website has past papers where you can see exam style questions but can't access the audio - so not as useful as you think. BUT you can also see the exemplar materials and full spec with mark scheme.

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse-music-j535-from-2012/>



“The bravest are surely those who have the clearest vision of what is before them, glory and danger alike, and yet notwithstanding, go out to meet it.”



Thucydides (460 – 395 B.C.)