



# Helping your child through their exams

Developing independence, strength  
and confidence





# We will cover:

- Creating the right conditions for study/revision
- Effective revision techniques and key resources
- Managing exam stress





# Creating the right conditions

Two aspects:

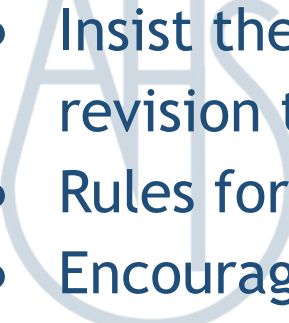
- The **physical** conditions - the right space, environment and resources
- The **psychological** conditions - the right mindset and motivation (more on this later)



# Physical conditions

- Help your child create a peaceful place to study, away from distractions (televisions, phones, siblings...)
- Lighting, temperature and noise levels - what is possible or practical
- Proper desk/table - not the bed or sofa - and preferably somewhere they can leave their books and equipment ready to go
- Something personal and mood lifting to catch the eye from time to time (without being a distraction) - photos, notes of encouragement
- Visible clock to help manage time. Small digital clock (with alarm timer) better than smartphone, to avoid temptation!



- 
- Insist they keep their space tidy and uncluttered - organised revision time, organised revision materials
  - Rules for the rest of the family?
  - Encourage regular breaks - 15 minutes every hour is a rough rule of thumb
  - Facilitate exercise, fresh air, healthy snacks (keep the cupboards stocked!) and hydration
  - Encourage them to keep a balance - work hard, play hard
  - Sleep really matters!



# Equipment

A simple and practical way to support your child is ensuring they have all the equipment they need for their revision - and a top up before the exams themselves is always a good idea (new pens for the first exam guarantees it won't run out!)


- Black pens will be used for all exams & clear pencil case
- Other pens for revision
- Pencils
- Highlighters
- Post its / markers
- Flashcards
- Plain paper for mind-maps





# What about background music?

Research suggests:

- Listening to music with lyrics distracts and impairs your ability to memorise and recall information.
- Listening to background music with no lyrics whilst studying does not impair,  
and can help some thanks to the therapeutic environment. However, music should be stopped before trying to test the information studied.
- Listening to music you like immediately before studying helps performance - could be a loud wake up song or something calming, the key is that it is   
your favourite!

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# Effective revision strategies

*Knowledge*



*Application*



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# Revision resources

- First stop - Google Classroom/Google Sites for lesson notes and subject specific links
- Revision guides and workbooks - CGP/Collins/OUP
- Online resources - Seneca, Quizlet, BBC Bitesize, GCSEPod



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# Seneca

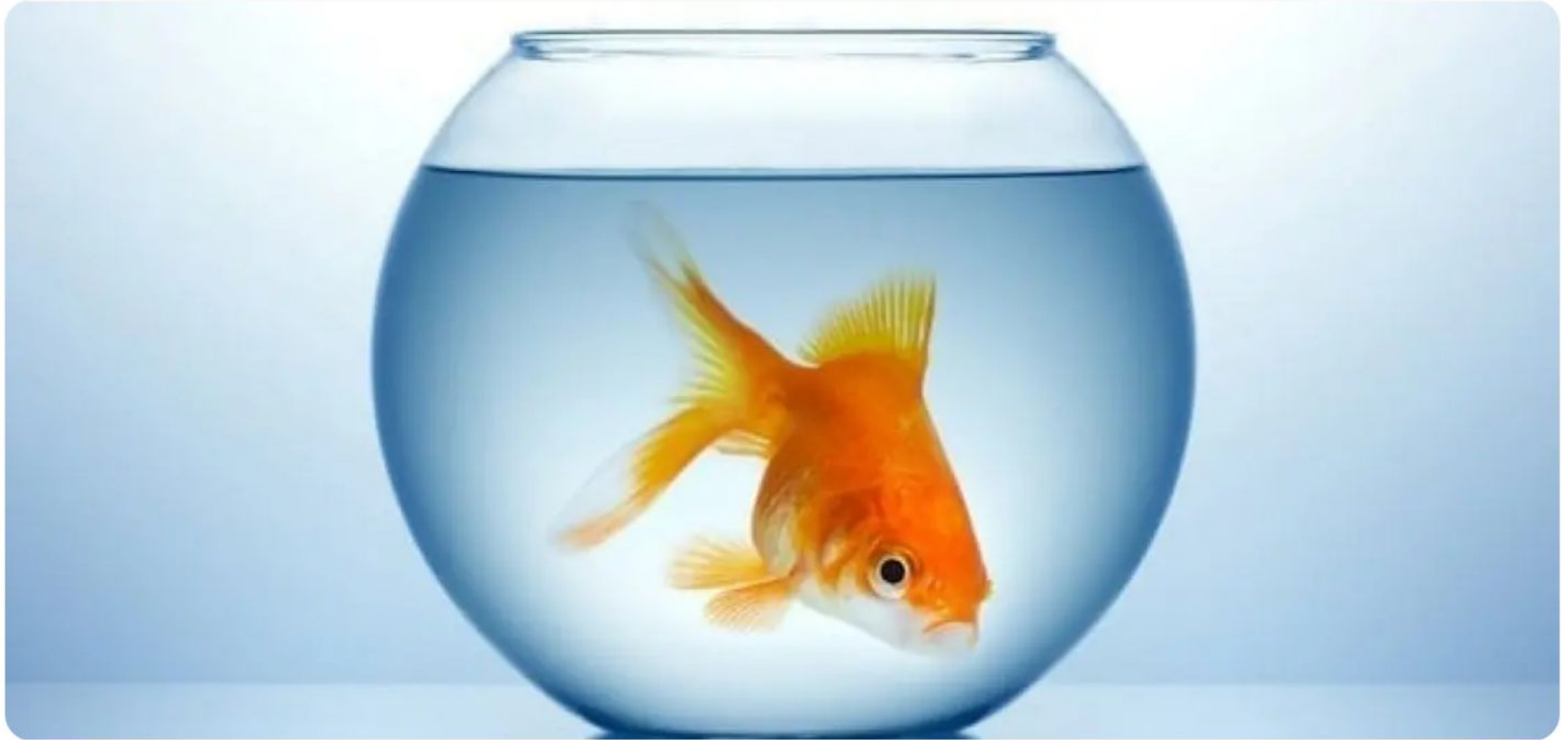


Seneca's assignments are based on neuroscience, written by experts and 'academically proven to improve students' outcomes.'

- Revision and assignments that adapt based on the pupil's answer to give them more or less of a topic, harder or easier questions - optimising their revision.
- Can be assignments set by teachers, or free revision of any topic by the pupil.
- Parents can also sign up for an account and link to your child to see what they are doing (or just encourage them to use it!)



# The Teenage Attention Span is Short. Plan Accordingly





Research shows that in 2000, the average attention span of a person was **12 seconds**.

Nowadays, it's **8 seconds**.

Research also shows that the average attention span of a goldfish is **9 seconds**. So, the ugly truth of the matter is that we, as a society, have a shorter attention span than a goldfish.





# More revision does not necessarily mean better revision!

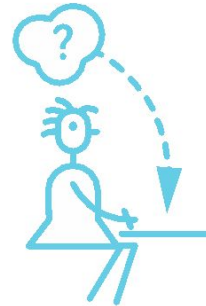
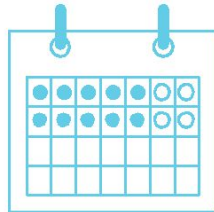


## Spaced Practice



### HOW TO DO IT

Start planning early for exams, and set aside a little bit of time every day. Five hours spread out over two weeks is better than the same five hours all at once.



# Revision timetables

- Different types of timetable for different exam periods - there is a big difference between what is possible during term time whilst lessons are still going on and what is possible during study leave
- Be realistic! When does your child work best?
- Share this around the house - stick it on the fridge, or is it an electronic shared document?
- Get your child to RAG rate all the topics for each subject - the red ones are the priority ones to revise



# REVISION TIMETABLE

Week beginning \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
08:00							
08:30							
09:00							
09:30							
10:00							
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19:00							
19:30							
20:00							
20:30							

Remember to break your revision into chunks (little and often), and schedule regular breaks. Colour code using the key below, and write in the box which topic you will be revising

FREE TIME
Maths
English
Physics
Chemistry
Biology

# HOW TO DO IT

Go back over the ideas again in different orders to strengthen your understanding.

TOPICS  
A B C



STUDY  
SESSION  
1

TOPICS  
C B A



STUDY  
SESSION  
2

TOPICS  
A C B



STUDY  
SESSION  
3



# Pomodoro Technique

**1** Decide what task you need to complete

**2** Set the timer for **25 minutes**

**3** Work on your task until the timer rings

**4** Take a short, **5 minute break**

Repeat 4 times



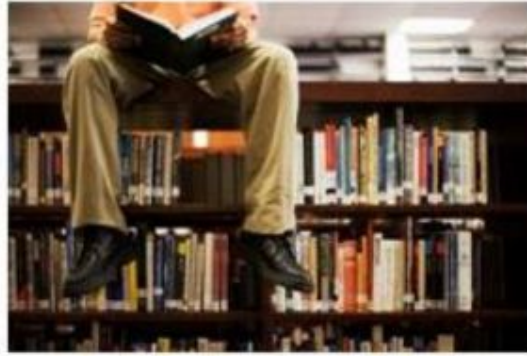
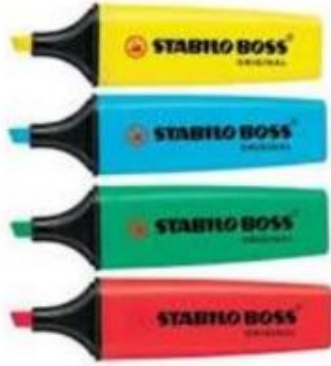
Take a longer, **15-30 minute break**

# BEWARE the illusion of competence!



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Highlighting texts  
Re-reading  
Summarising text





AQA

DRAFT SPECIMEN MATERIAL

GCSE  
GEOGRAPHY

Paper 1 Living with the physical environment

Specimen 2015

Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes

**Materials**

For this paper you must have:

- a pencil
- a ruler

**Instructions**

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Fill in the boxes at the bottom of this page.
- Answer **all** questions in Section A.
- Answer **two** questions in Section B.
- Answer question 5 and **either** question 6 **or** question 7 in Section C.
- You must answer the questions in the spaces provided. Do not write outside the box around each page or on blank pages.
- Do all rough work in this book. Cross through any work you do not want to be marked.



Quizlet



gcsepod  
education on demand



Testing

Quizzing

Interrogation – asking “why?”


Transforming information – flashcards,  
mindmaps, etc

Full past papers

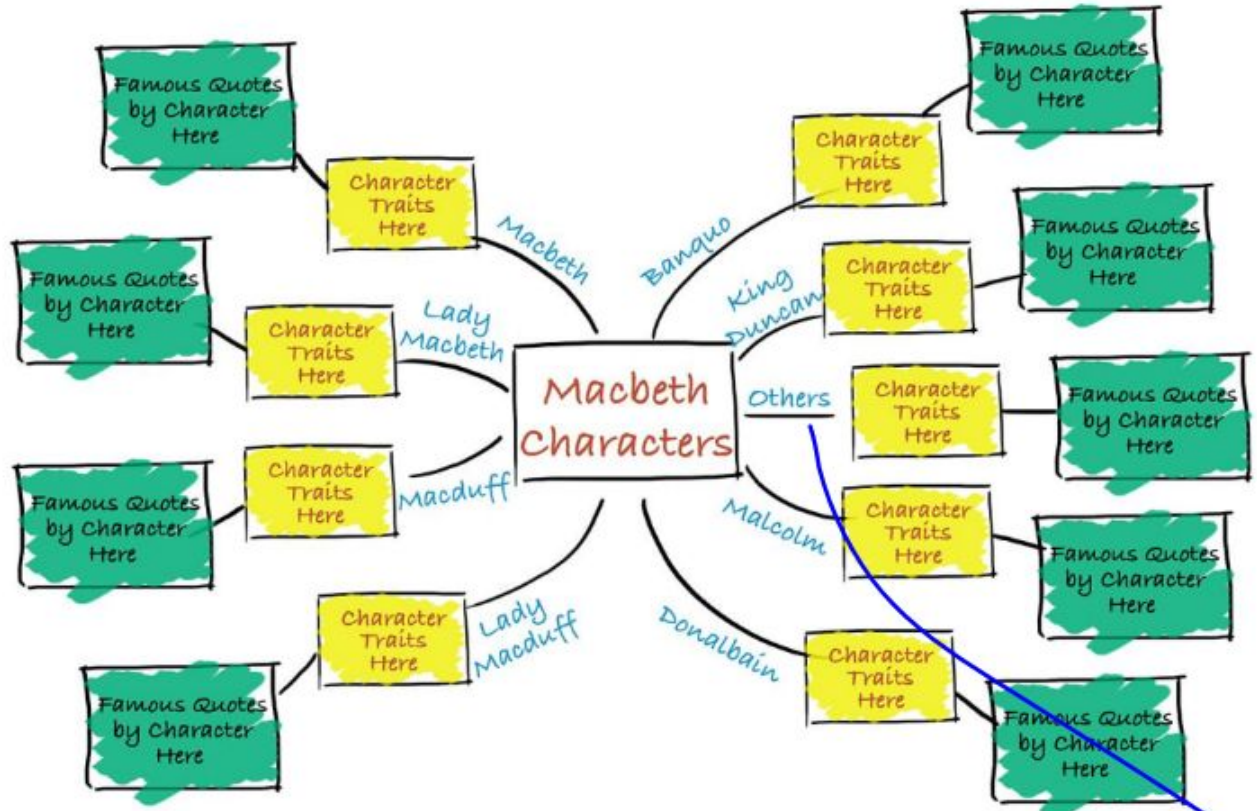
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# Learning/Revision Techniques

<h2>Map It</h2> <p>Create a mind map of the key points.</p> 	<h2>Journey It</h2> <p>Remember lists of information by placing images on a journey.</p> 	<h2>Index It</h2> <p>Transfer the key points to index cards.</p> 
<h2>Story It</h2> <p>Create a weird and vivid story using the key points.</p> 	<h2>Mnemonic It</h2> <p>Use the first letter of key words to create a sentence.</p> <p>A well known example: <b>W</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Never</li><li>Eat</li><li>Shredded</li><li>Wheat</li></ul> 	<h2>Click It</h2> <p>Create a presentation about the key points.</p> 
<h2>Flip It</h2> <p>Write questions and answers and flip it anywhere.</p> 	<h2>Timeline It</h2> <p>Place key points along a line in date order.</p> 	<h2>Sing It</h2> <p>Set key points to some familiar music/rap.</p> 
<h2>Record It</h2> <p>Use your mobile to record yourself explaining the key points and play it back regularly.</p> 	<h2>Post It</h2> <p>Write key words on to Post Its and stick them around your room.</p> 	<h2>Comic It</h2> <p>Create your own comic strip using the key points.</p> 







**RIVERS**

**UPPER COURSE**  
 • more hours of sunlight, profit still made on less valuable land, high rainfall means steady water supply  
 • rugged hillsides, great scenery

**MIDDLE COURSE**  
 • valley floor with fertile **alluvium**  
 • valley difficult to build on  
 white water rafting...

**LOWER COURSE**  
 • flatter/warmer land, sheltered valley bottom  
 • cut flower farming, cities

**CONIFEROUS FORESTRY**  
 • hillwalking + climbing

**oats/potato farms**  
 • small villages

**cut flower farming**  
 • cities

**DRAINAGE BASIN**  
 The edge of the basin

**SOURCE** - the very beginning of the river's water flow

**TRIBUTARY** - a small river or stream that joins a larger river

**CONFLUENCE** - where two rivers meet

**CHANNEL** - where the river flows

**MOUTH** - where a river meets the sea

**WATERFALLS**  
 • **plunge pool** - water falls over hard rock  
 • **erosion** - soft rock  
 • **hydraulic action** - waterfalls crumble into plunge pools  
 • **overhang** - waterfalls retreats  
 • **avulsion** - collects, waterfall retreats + creates gorge...

**V-SHAPED VALLEYS** → often found in upper course  
 → steeper course → more energy → rock underneath eroded by **abrasion** and **hydraulic action** → loose material on valley sides fall to river bed causing more **abrasion** or builds up on river banks to make slope at bottom more gentle, giving valley its V-shape.

**MEANDERS AND OX-BOW LAKES**  
 • **Erosion**  
 • **Deposition**  
 → fast flowing → slow flowing

**RIVER FEATURES AND FORMS**  
 • original water level  
 • flooded water level  
 • post-flood land state

**EROSION**  
 • **ABRASION** - material hitting off river bed and banks  
 • **CORROSION** - Over time, chemicals in water dissolve material.

**TRANSPORTATION** is the movement of materials in the river and deposition is when the material is dropped by the river (as it no longer has enough energy to carry it). Sediment deposited by a river is called **alluvium**.

**SALTATION** - material carried along in short bursts  
**SUSPENSION** - material carried along in water for long distances  
**SOLUTION** - material from rocks and soil

**ATTRITION** - Material carried by river hit off each other and gradually break down.

**MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION**  
 • **TRACTION** - material moved along river bed  
 • **SALTATION** - material carried in short bursts  
 • **SUSPENSION** - material carried in water for long distances  
 • **SOLUTION** - material from rocks and soil

**WATER POLLUTION**  
 • litter  
 • peace  
 • scenery  
 • deformation  
 • water pollution

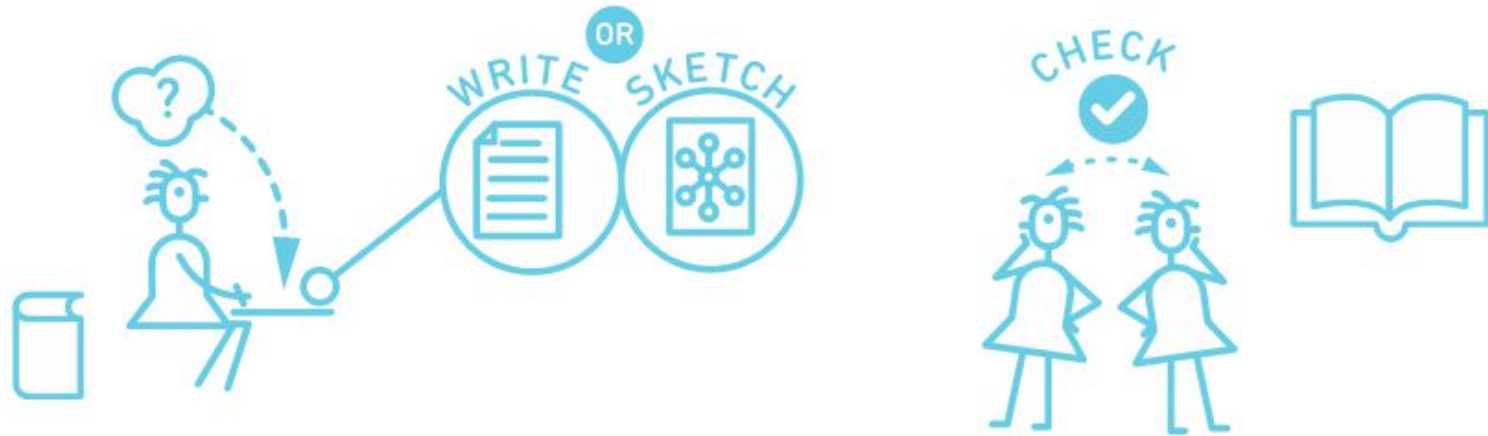
**WIND FARMS**  
 •  $E = 70+$   
 •  $E = 8-0$



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## HOW TO DO IT

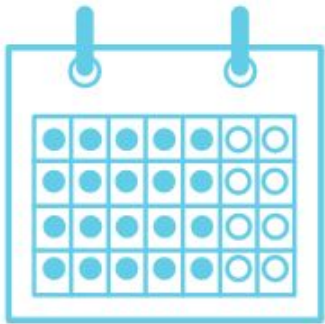
Put away your class materials, and write or sketch everything you know. Be as thorough as possible. Then, check your class materials for accuracy and important points you missed.





## HOW TO DO IT

Take as many practice tests as you can get your hands on. If you don't have ready-made tests, try making your own and trading with a friend who has done the same.



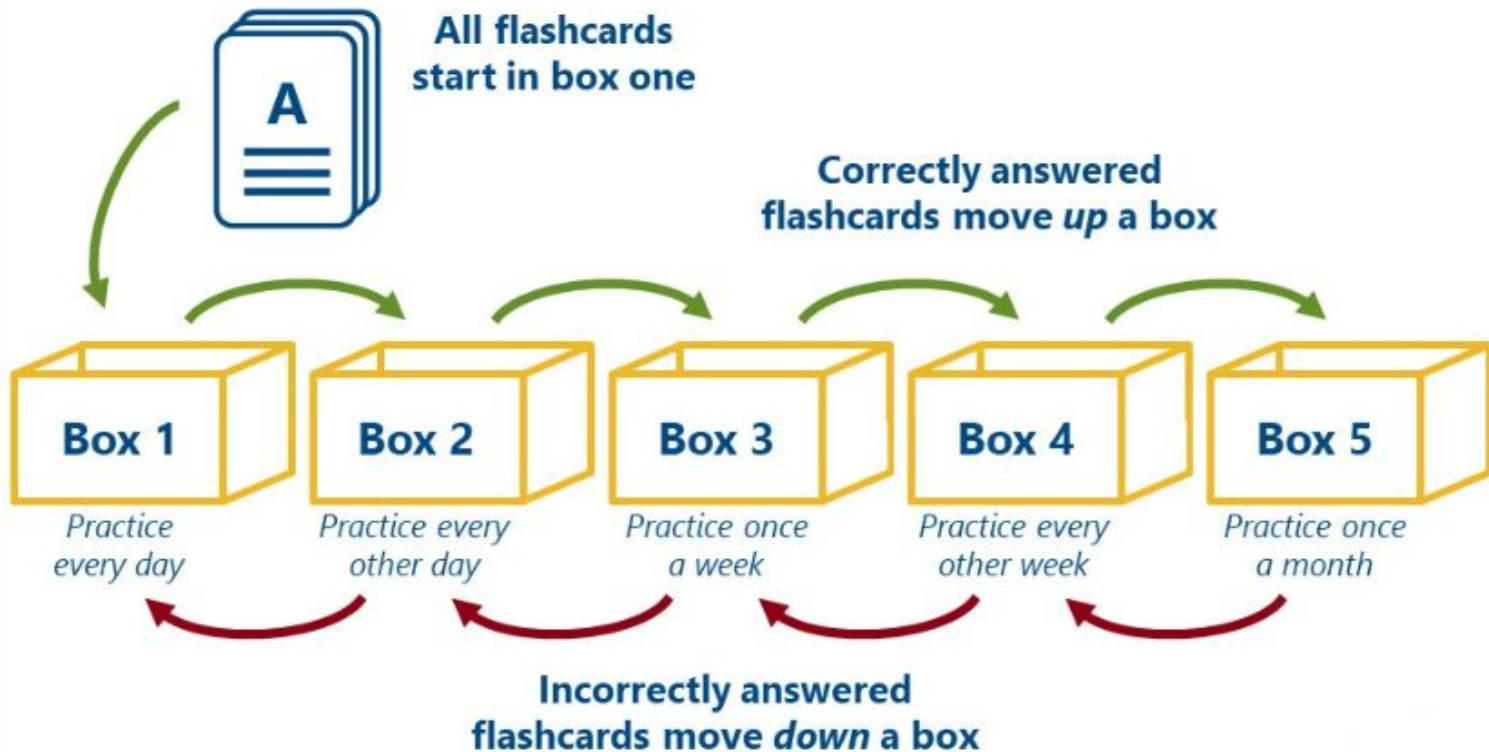
## HOW TO DO IT

You can also make flashcards. Just make sure you practice recalling the information on them, and go beyond definitions by thinking of links between ideas.





*Increase your memory with spaced repetition and active recall*



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# The psychological conditions

Be the coach as well as the manager!



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# The coach



- Help your child understand the reason for their studies - what is their vision? Knowing this helps motivate them and they will achieve more.
- Show them how hard work has worked for you.
- Help them to believe the positive truth about themselves (i.e. that they can do well, and certainly better than they probably believe).
- Keep talking - realistic and genuine positivity, not forced! How do you feel today? How do you feel your revision is going? What do you need from me at the moment?
- Keep things in perspective!





# The manager



- Ensure they have drawn up a timetable and stick to it.
- Ensure they are following advice around breaks, exercise, sleep, organised revision space, snacks/hydration, etc.
- Help them revise effectively - not just reading notes.
- Actively be part of their revision - this does not mean you need to be an expert in the subject matter! Quizzing them, testing them on their flashcards.
- Ensure they have the materials they need.
- Rewards and incentives?





# Managing Exam Stress

- Back off! No point nagging at this point - at this point it is all around support and wellbeing. Coach much more than the manager.
- Don't pressure them - at this point, they know full well of the expectations you have of them, you don't need to repeat them, as it will just increase stress and may impair performance.
- Let the messy bedroom slide, let them off chores, etc.
- Strict rules for the rest of the household - give them space, accept irritability, them being on edge etc.





- Help them get a good night's sleep before each exam, and downtime before going to bed. Discourage last minute cramming.
- Get them to pack and check their equipment, lay out clothing, etc the night before.
- Set an additional alarm and (if possible) allow extra time for travel to reduce exam morning stress.
- Give them healthy, regular, balanced meals. Particularly a healthy exam day breakfast - don't let them skip it, even if they are really nervous. BBC Food - exam day breakfast ideas!  
[https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/collections/breakfasts\\_for\\_exam\\_day](https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/collections/breakfasts_for_exam_day)
- Just be there for your child - to talk to, to come to you if they need you. Reassurance and positive mindset throughout.
- Recognise if they are really struggling - and turn to others if needed, be it us at school, GP, friends, etc.





# Relaxation and Grounding techniques from Young Minds



## Square breathing

this is where you breathe in for four seconds, hold for four seconds, breathe out for four seconds, hold for four seconds and repeat.

### SQUARE BREATHING





## Going through my senses

to do this, name five things you can see, four things you can touch, three things you can hear, two things you can smell and one thing you can taste.





## Just chatting

taking your mind off of the worry is a lot easier than you'd think sometimes.



# The alphabet game

The alphabet game is where you name something for every letter of the alphabet within any category of subject. This could be animals, people's names, foods etc.

I had never found something that had me back to thinking logically and calmly so fast. Now it is definitely my go-to exercise for anxious days (mine, or other people's). This isn't an instant fix by any means, and everyone will have different experiences, but it's an excellent grounding technique to get your brain switched back from the fear and panic that has thrown all rationality out the window.



# Five Ways To Wellbeing



**FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING**  
INTRODUCE THESE FIVE SIMPLE STRATEGIES INTO YOUR LIFE & YOU WILL FEEL THE BENEFITS

- CONNECT**  
TALK & LISTEN. BE THERE. FEEL CONNECTED
- BE ACTIVE**  
DO WHAT YOU CAN. ENJOY WHAT YOU DO. MOVE YOUR BODY
- TAKE NOTICE**  
REMEMBER THE SIMPLE THINGS THAT GIVE YOU JOY
- Give**  
YOUR TIME, YOUR WORDS, YOUR PRESENCE
- KEEP LEARNING**  
EMBRACE NEW EXPERIENCES. SEE OPPORTUNITIES. SURPRISE YOURSELF

Mental Health Foundation  
mhf.org.uk

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# More help and advice

[NHS website](#) on helping with exam stress

[Young Minds](#)

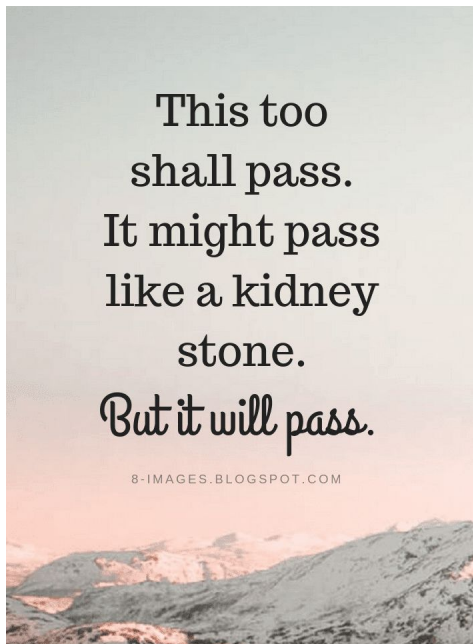
[Childline](#)

[Resources](#) for parents on our website





Thank you for all the support you are giving!



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