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**STUDY  
BUDDY**  
YEAR 11



# TOP 10 WAYS TO BEAT EXAM STRESS

## 1. Make a Realistic Revision Plan

Break subjects into small chunks and spread them out. You don't need to revise everything in one night - slow and steady works better.

## 2. Use Active Revision

Don't just read notes.  
Try: flashcards, practice questions, teaching someone else and past papers.

## 3. Take proper breaks

Use the Pomodoro method:  
25 minutes of work → 5-minute break.  
Your brain needs rest to stay focused.

## 4. Get Enough Sleep

Sleep is revision. A tired brain can't think clearly, so aim for 8-9 hours where possible.

## 5. Eat and drink well

Water, fruit, and proper meals help your energy levels. Too much caffeine and sugar can make anxiety worse.

## 6. Talk About How You're Feeling

Stress is normal. Talk to friends, teachers, parents or school support staff. You don't have to deal with it alone.

## 7. Try Simple Breathing Techniques

Slow breathing can calm your nerves:  
Breathe in for 4, hold for 4, out for 6  
Repeat a few times.

## 8. Keep Things in Perspective

Exams matter, but they don't define you. There are always other routes, retakes, and options in the future.

## 9. Stay Active

Even a short walk, stretch, or bit of sport can reduce stress and clear your head.

## 10. Celebrate Small Wins

Finished a topic? Did a past paper?  
That's progress.  
Reward yourself - you've earned it.

# HOW TO USE PAST EXAM PAPERS (YEAR 11 GUIDE)

Past papers are one of the best revision tools for GCSEs - if you use them properly. Here's how to get the most out of them.



## 1. START WITH THE RIGHT PAPER

Make sure you use:

- ▶ The **correct exam board** (*WJEC, Pearson etc.*)
  - ▶ The **right subject and tier** (*e.g. Foundation or Higher paper*)
  - ▶ Recent papers if possible

Ask your teacher or check your exam board website for past papers.



## 2. TRY A PAPER WITHOUT NOTES

Treat it like the real exam to practise timing:

- ▶ Time yourself
- ▶ No phone (remove it from the room!)
- ▶ No notes
- ▶ Quiet space



## 3. LOOK AT THE MARK SCHEME

Don't just check the answers - read:

- ▶ How marks are awarded
- ▶ What keywords are needed
- ▶ How much detail is expected

This helps you answer questions in the ways the examiners expect.



## 4. LEARN FROM YOUR MISTAKES

Ask yourself:

- ▶ Was it a knowledge problem?
  - ▶ A misunderstanding?
  - ▶ A timing issue?

Mistakes = learning opportunities.



## 5. CREATE A 'FIX-IT' LIST

Write down:

- ▶ Topics you struggled with
  - ▶ Common mistakes
  - ▶ Weak exam skills

Use this to focus your next revision session.



## 6. REDO THE SAME QUESTIONS

After revising the topic:

- ▶ Try the same questions again
  - ▶ Aim for full marks

This proves you've improved.



## 7. PRACTISE EXAM TIMING

Learn how long to spend on:

- ▶ 1-mark questions
- ▶ 4-6 mark questions
- ▶ Extended answers

Good timing = more marks.



## 8. LEARN THE COMMAND WORDS

Know what these command words mean for each subject:

- ▶ **Describe**
- ▶ **Explain**
- ▶ **Compare**
- ▶ **Evaluate**

They tell you *how* to answer the question.



## 9. DIFFERENT PURPOSES

You can use papers for different purposes:

- ▶ Do full papers
- ▶ Just practise one topic
- ▶ Focus on 6-mark questions
- ▶ Practise maths calculations

Mix it up and stay motivated.



## 10. TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

Keep a record of:

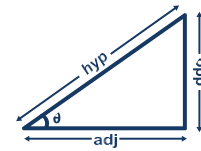
- ▶ Scores
- ▶ Weak areas
- ▶ Improvements

Seeing progress boosts confidence.



### PRACTISE WITHOUT A CALCULATOR

Make sure you practise both calculator and non-calculator papers.



### USE THE FORMULA SHEET

Learn what's on it and practise using it properly.



### SHOW ALL YOUR WORKING

Even if the final answer is wrong, you can still get method marks.



### MARK CAREFULLY

Check:

- ▶ Method marks
- ▶ Accuracy marks
- ▶ Where you lost marks

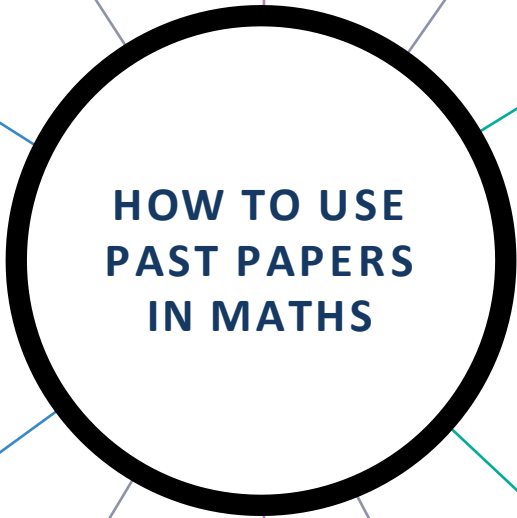


### SPOT TOPIC PATTERNS

Maths papers often repeat topics like:

- ▶ Algebra
- ▶ Percentages
- ▶ Angles
- ▶ Graphs

Focus on your weak areas.



# HOW TO USE PAST PAPERS IN MATHS



### PRACTISE WORDED PROBLEMS

These are usually the hardest. Slow down and underline key information.



### REDO HARD QUESTIONS

Repeat tricky questions until you can solve them confidently.



### IMPROVE YOUR SPEED

Time yourself so you don't rush the last questions.



### LEARN COMMON MISTAKES

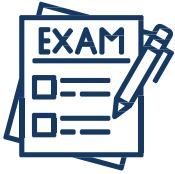
E.g. rounding errors, missing units, incorrect rearranging.



### USE EXAM TRICKS

Check answers by:

- ▶ Estimating
- ▶ Substituting back
- ▶ Checking units



### KNOW THE PAPER FORMAT

Learn what each section is:

- Reading
- Writing
- Literature



### USE PEEL/PETAL

Structure your paragraphs:

- Point
- Evidence
- Explain
- Link



### PRACTISE PLANNING ANSWERS

Spend 2-5 minutes planning longer answers.



### LEARN KEY QUOTES

For Literature, memorise short, powerful quotes.



### ANALYSE LANGUAGE

Use words like:

- “suggests”
- “implies”
- “creates”



### PRACTISE CREATIVE WRITING

Try:

- Descriptions
- Story openings
- Persuasive writing



### IMPROVE TIMING

Don't spend too long on one question.

## HOW TO USE PAST PAPERS IN ENGLISH



### MARK USING THE CRITERIA

Check:

- Structure
- Vocabulary
- Analysis



### IMPROVE SPAG

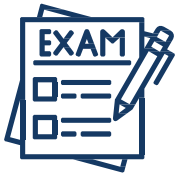
Spelling, punctuation and grammar matter.



### LEARN EXAMINER PHRASES

Phrases like:

- “This shows...”
- “The writer suggests...”



### USE THE CORRECT PAPERS

Choose:

- Biology, Chemistry, Physics
- Foundation or Higher
- Combined or Triple



### USE KEYWORDS

Marks depend on using scientific language correctly.



### LEARN THE REQUIRED PRACTICAL METHODS

These often appear in questions.



### PRACTISE CALCULATIONS

For example:

- Speed
- Density
- Energy
- Magnification



### REVISE WEAK TOPICS

Use your mistakes to guide your revision.



## HOW TO USE PAST PAPERS IN SCIENCE



### ANSWER IN FULL SENTENCES

Especially for 4-6 mark questions.



### STUDY MARK SCHEMES

Look for:

- Key phrases
- Exact wording



### PRACTISE GRAPH QUESTIONS

Learn how to:

- Label axes
- Describe patterns
- Explain trends



### MEMORISE REQUIRED FACTS

E.g. equations, processes, definitions.



### REDO QUESTIONS AFTER REVISING

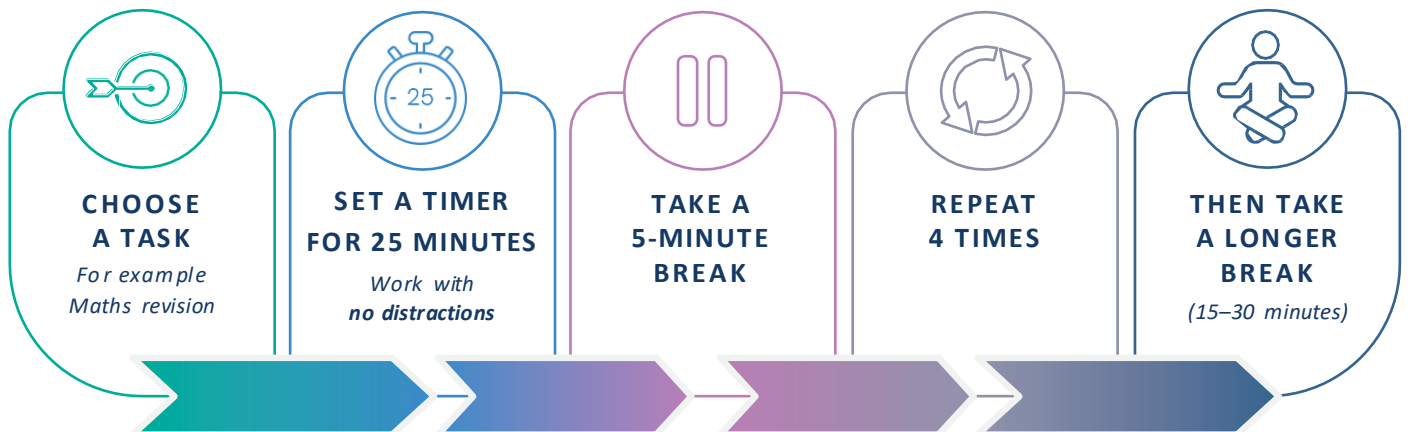
This proves your improvement.

# THE POMODORO TECHNIQUE – A SIMPLE GUIDE

The Pomodoro Technique is a time-management method that helps you stay focused, avoid burnout, and get more revision done in less time.

A Pomodoro = 25 minutes of focused work, then a 5-minute break.

## HOW IT WORKS



### WHY IT HELPS

- Keeps your focus sharp
- Stops procrastination
- Makes revision feel manageable
  - Reduces stress
- Helps you avoid burnout

### HOW TO USE IT FOR REVISION

Use one Pomodoro to:

- Revise one topic
- Complete past paper questions
  - Make flashcards
  - Learn key quotes
  - Practise calculations

**Small goals = big progress.**

### BREAK TIME IDEAS

During breaks:

- Stretch
- Drink water
- Walk around
- Rest your eyes
- Avoid social media if possible

### TOP TIPS

- Put your phone away
- Use a proper timer
- Write a to-do list first
  - Be realistic
- Reward yourself after sessions

### Final Thought

You don't need to revise for hours non-stop.  
25 minutes of focus beats 2 hours of distraction.

# HOW TO USE AI FOR EFFECTIVE REVISION

AI can be a revision coach that helps you practise, understand, and improve - but it must never replace your own thinking. Use this guide to make AI work for you, not against you.

## USE AI TO HELP YOU:

### Understand Topics and Concepts

- Explain topics in simple language
- Break down difficult concepts
- Give step-by-step examples
- Summarising lots of text

Try these prompts:

*“Explain photosynthesis in simple GCSE-level language.”  
Or “Explain photosynthesis like you are explaining it to a Year 7 student”.*

Copy and paste text from your booklet/document and type - *“Summarise this text and select the 10 most important pieces of information. Give me this information as 10 bullet points”.*

### Practise Exam Questions

- Generate exam-style questions
- Create quizzes and flashcards
- Check answers against mark schemes

Try this prompt:

*“Create 5 WJEC GCSE Science (physics) exam-style questions on electricity with answers using WJEC specification language and typical WJEC specification command words. Include mark allocations and clear mark-scheme style answers”.*

### Plan Your Revision

- Make a realistic revision timetable
- Break subjects into small chunks
- Help you revise a little, often

Try this prompt:

*“Create a 3-week GCSE revision plan for WJEC GCSE Maths. A maximum of 1 hour per day”.*

### Improve Exam Technique

- Help structure 6-12 mark answers
- Explain why marks were lost
- Show what grade 7-9 answers include

Try this prompt:

*“How can I improve this answer to achieve a B grade using the WJEC GCSE Geography mark scheme?” (Copy and paste your answer).*

### Creating Revision materials

- Create revision cards
- Create a quiz with answers

Try this prompt:

*“Create a set of revision cards with a question on one side and an answer on the reverse using the WJEC GCSE History specification for Unit 1.”*

## WHAT AI IS NOT ALLOWED FOR

### YOU SHOULD NEVER USE AI TO:

- ✗ Write coursework or controlled assessments
- ✗ Complete homework to hand in as your own
- ✗ Copy answers without understanding them

If you wouldn't be allowed help in the exam, don't use AI for it.

## HOW TO USE AI PROPERLY (THE RIGHT WAY)

### ALWAYS

- ✓ Read and understand the answer
- ✓ Check it against your notes/textbook
- ✓ Ask why, not just what

### NEVER

- ✗ Copy and paste answers
- ✗ Memorise without understanding
- ✗ Use AI instead of revising yourself

## HIGH-QUALITY REVISION PROMPTS YOU CAN USE

**FOR TESTING YOURSELF:** *"Test me on this topic. Don't give hints unless I ask."*

**FOR FIXING MISTAKES:** *"Here is my answer. What went wrong and how do I improve it?"*

**FOR CONFIDENCE:** *"Explain this like I'm in Year 7, then again at GCSE level."*

## A SIMPLE RULE TO REMEMBER

AI can help you practise and improve - but you must do the thinking.

### USED PROPERLY, AI CAN:

- ✓ Boost confidence
- ✓ Save time
- ✓ Improve exam performance

### USED BADLY, IT CAN:

- ✗ Stop you learning
- ✗ Lower your grades

# HOW TO CREATE AND USE A REVISION TIMETABLE

A simple guide for Year 11 students.

## WHY USE A REVISION TIMETABLE?

A revision timetable helps you:

- ✓ Stay organised
- ✓ Avoid last-minute cramming
- ✓ Balance school, revision, and free time
- ✓ Cover every subject properly

It turns “I should revise” into a clear plan.

1

### STEP 1: LIST YOUR SUBJECTS AND TOPICS

Write down:

- All your GCSE subjects
- The main topics for each subject

*Example:*

- **Biology:** Cell biology, infection & response, bioenergetics
- **English:** Poetry, Macbeth, unseen texts

This helps you see what you actually need to revise.

2

### STEP 2: BE REALISTIC ABOUT YOUR TIME

Look at your week and mark:

- School hours
- Homework
- Clubs/Work
- Relaxing time
- Family time

Now see where revision can fit.

Even **30–60 minutes a day** is enough if you use it well.

3

### STEP 3: CREATE YOUR TIMETABLE

Use:

- A planner
- A printed sheet
- A notes app
- A whiteboard

For each day, add:

- Subject
- Topic
- Time

4

#### STEP 4: MIX YOUR SUBJECTS

Don't revise the same subject all day.

Mixing subjects:

- Keeps you focused
- Helps your memory
- Stops boredom

Try to include:

- A written subject
- A science or maths subject
- A lighter task (like flashcards)

5

#### STEP 5: USE ACTIVE REVISION

Avoid just reading notes.

Instead, try:

- Flashcards
- Past exam questions
- Blurting (write what you remember)
  - Mindmaps
- Teaching someone else

These methods help you remember, not just read.

6

#### STEP 6: ADD BREAKS

Your brain needs rest.

Use:

- 25-30 minutes revision
  - 5-minute break
- After 2 sessions, take a longer break

No breaks = less focus.

7

#### STEP 7: STICK TO IT (BUT BE FLEXIBLE)

You won't follow it perfectly every day - that's normal.

If you miss a session:

- Don't panic
- Just move it to another day

The timetable is there to **help**, not stress you out.

8

#### STEP 8: REVIEW IT WEEKLY

Every week, ask:

- What's working?
- What isn't?
- Do I need more time for any subjects?

Adjust your timetable to suit you.

## EXAMPLE YEAR 11 GCSE REVISION TIMETABLE (COLOUR-CODED)

Maths	<i>Trigonometry &amp; sequences</i>
English Language	<i>Fiction conventions and features, figurative devices &amp; structure devices</i>
English Literature	<i>Plot characterisation and theme in Macbeth and Animal Farm</i>
Biology	<i>Cell biology, infection &amp; response, bioenergetics</i>
Chemistry	<i>Quantitative chemistry &amp; equations for reactions</i>
Physics	<i>Magnetism and electromagnetism</i>
History	<i>Understanding the methods used to combat crime in the 19<sup>th</sup> century</i>
Geography	<i>Coastal landscapes - the Jurassic Coast, coastal processes &amp; geological structure</i>

## WEEKDAY TIMETABLE

TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
4:00 - 4:30	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
4:30 - 5:15	Maths	Chemistry	Physics	Biology	Physics
5:15 - 6:00	English Language	History	English Literature	Maths	English Language
6:00 - 6:30	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner
6:30 - 7:15	Biology	Maths	Geography	Chemistry	

## SATURDAY

TIME	SUBJECT
10:00 - 11:00	History
11:15 - 12:15	Maths
1:00 - 2:00	Chemistry
2:15 - 3:00	Geography

## SUNDAY (REVIEW DAY)

TIME	SUBJECT
11:00 - 12:00	Biology
12:15 - 1:00	English Literature
2:00 - 3:00	Weekly Review

## Final Tips!

- ✓ Start early - little and often
- ✓ Be honest about your effort
  - ✓ Reward yourself
- ✓ Ask for help when you need it
- ✓ A good revision timetable can make exams feel **manageable**, not scary.

# YEAR 11 REVISION TIMETABLE

Name: ..... Week Beginning: .....

## WEEKDAY TIMETABLE (MONDAY - FRIDAY)

TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
4:00 - 4:30	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
4:30 - 5:15					
5:15 - 6:00					
6:00 - 6:30					
6:30 - 7:15					

# TOP 5 EXAM DAY TIPS

1

## ARRIVE EARLY

Get to school with time to spare. Rushing = stress. Take a few deep breaths to settle your nerves. (Try box breathing if you're really nervous)

2

## READ EVERY QUESTION CAREFULLY

Underline key words and check what the question is *actually asking*.

3

## MANAGE YOUR TIME

Don't spend too long on one question.  
Move on and come back later if needed.

4

## SHOW WHAT YOU KNOW

Write something for every question - you can still earn marks even if you're unsure.

5

## STAY POSITIVE

You've prepared for this.  
Trust yourself and do your best.

### Bonus Tips

- ✓ Bring the right equipment
- ✓ Drink water
- ✓ Don't panic if others finish early
- ✓ Focus on your paper, not anyone else's

## What else might help?



### Get some sleep

How many hours of sleep do you get each night? On average, teenagers claim to get 6-7 hours a night, when they should really be aiming for 9-10 hours. If you are only getting 6-7, you are depriving yourself of over 1000 hours of sleep each year. You must be exhausted!

#### What does the research say?

Put very simply, we experience two types of sleep: deep sleep, which helps our body to recover; and REM, which helps restore our mind. Without enough REM sleep, you are much more prone to anxiety, stress, lack of concentration, mood swings and poor decision making.

A 2009 study (*van der Helm and Walker*) found a 40% reduction in memory when sleep deprived. Not only that, but you are more likely to forget positive memories when tired, just recalling and retaining negative memories. Excessive sleep loss therefore impacts on our mental health and stress levels.



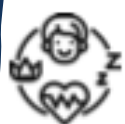
### Limit your screen time

Mobile phones can be great tools for learning but are they having a negative impact on your learning? Catching up with friends, social media, movies and box sets is great – but when is the best time to do these things?

#### What does the research say?

A 2014 study (*Thornton et al*) found that just having a mobile phone nearby can lead to a 20% reduction in attention, concentration and performance.

Another study in 2013 (*Wood et al*) found that the glare from phones and iPads tricks our brain into thinking it is daytime, therefore stopping melatonin (the sleep hormone) being triggered. Two hours on your phone or iPad at night results in 20% less melatonin being released. At the very least, dim your screen prior to bedtime - or better still, don't use it at all.



### Look after yourself

Being kind to yourself each day can have a big impact on your performance during revision and exams. Take a break and get some exercise. Aim to start the day with cereal or toast – but be sure to treat yourself later on in the day. Find time to do the things you love. Reward yourself for your hard work.

#### What does the research say?

A range of studies in 2016 (*Miller and Krizen*) found that students who took a 12 minute walk reported a 20% increase in happiness, attentiveness and confidence, compared to those who spent that time sitting down. Even taking a 5 minute walk resulted in similar benefits. Break up your study sessions with a quick stroll and see for yourself.

# HOW YOU LEARN

## 1. RETRIEVAL PRACTICE IS KEY

Instead of just rereading notes, you should test yourself and practise bringing information up from memory. This builds stronger recall pathways in your brain.

## 2. REORGANISE YOUR NOTES

Organise what you learn into:

- ▶ mindmaps
- ▶ flashcards
- ▶ summaries in your own words

This helps you understand and remember better.

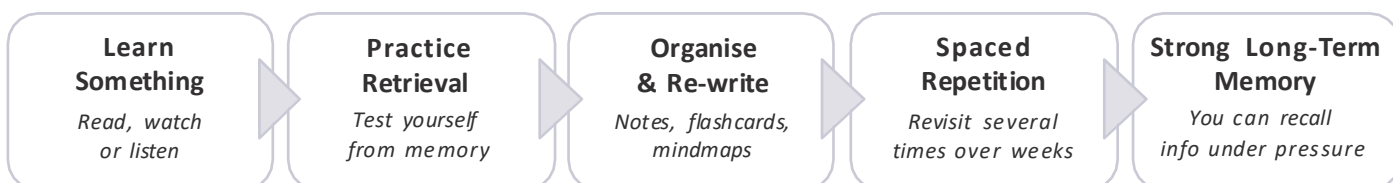
## 3. SPACED REVISION BEATS CRAMMING

Studying a topic over **several sessions** spaced out over time is much more effective than doing it all at once. Imagine revisiting a topic several times before exams - that's powerful revision!

## 4. TEACH SOMEONE ELSE

Explaining a topic to another person (or even to yourself!) forces you to practise the information - which strengthens memory.

## HOW LEARNING WORKS



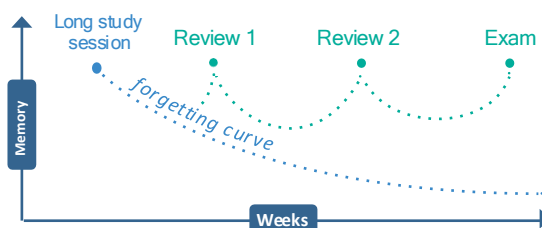
### TOP REVISION TIPS

- ✓ Use past papers and quizzes to practise retrieval
- ✓ Don't just read notes - rewrite them in new formats
- ✓ Mix up topics rather than block one subject for hours
- ✓ Spread your revision over days/weeks
- ✓ Teach someone else to check your understanding

### SPACED PRACTICE

*And the Forgetting Curve*

- ✓ Spread your learning out
- ✓ Three is better than one.



**Your memory gets stronger with each spaced review.**

- ✓ Flashcards
- ✓ Quizzes
- ✓ Mindmaps
- ✓ Past papers

## FURTHER STRATEGIES



### Brain dump

Choose a topic and write down as much as you can remember, without referring to your notes. Check your notes and see what you missed then try to fill the gaps without the notes. Check your notes a third time and add the missing information.



### Flash cards

Write flashcards for each topic, in all subjects, then mix them up for the most effective revision. Check out the Leitner System for effective spacing and interleaving. Keep your flashcards simple – one question, one answer per card.



### Map it out

Take an essay question or writing question and map out your answer, without writing a full response. Look at the mark scheme and decide if your plan meets the criteria. Do this for a number of questions, then choose one and write the full response.



### Past papers

Ask your teacher for practice questions or exam papers. Complete them without notes in exam conditions, then check your answers and identify the gaps in your knowledge, so you can target your revision.



### Quizzes

Write a set of questions and answers and ask someone else to test you. It's important to either write or say your answers aloud. Reading through quizzes in your head can give you a false sense of security.



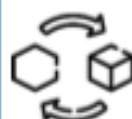
### Practise introductions

For essay subjects, take a past exam question and practise writing effective introductions and conclusions. Look back at your notes and remind yourself of the important things to remember. Practise for different topics, texts and papers.



### Thinking hard: reduce

Read a section of your notes then put them aside and reduce what you read to 3 bullet points, each one no more than 10 words. Look back at the notes and decide if you missed anything important. Hide the notes and write a fourth bullet point.



### Thinking hard: transform

Read a paragraph from your notes or a text book and transform it into a diagram, chart or sketch – no words allowed. Look at a diagram in Science, for example, and transform it into a paragraph of explanation.



### Thinking hard: connect

For each subject, consider the exam papers and group together questions that require the same technique to answer. Write down the requirements of each type. Find a previous example you've completed and identify where you've met the criteria.



### Key vocabulary

For a particular topic, make a list of key vocabulary, then do the following: define each word; use each term in a sentence; create a question where the key word is the answer; identify other words which connect to each of the words in your list.



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*"Success isn't about being perfect  
- it's about doing your best with  
the preparation you've put in."*