



Bradley Stoke
Community School

Ways to Learn

Revision Techniques for GCSE

Believing in your
success

How do I Learn ?

- We all learn in different ways
- There are at least 8 different types of 'intelligence' that we know of, so nobody is actually not intelligent, people are simply intelligent in different ways.
- You must formulate your own ways of learning and decide what is best for you, which will differ in many ways to your friends and colleagues.
- You do not have to revise the same way for each GCSE. What works best for what subject ?

Possible Revision Techniques

1. Highlight Key Points

- Underline in various colours (colour coding) important aspects of work. Use to chunk down work, giving you information to process later
- Very effective to visually draw out key points for revision

2. Make a Mind Map

- Like a spider diagram using colours so that each leg of the spider is a different colour and is a related aspect. Use pictures as well as words. This could be used as a summary from highlighting key points and is a good way to visually remember things

3. The Shrinking Mind Map

- The aim in revision is to shrink as much of the key points down into a small space. The process of this actually helps you learn the information.
- The result is that you have a portable device that you can carry around and learn from. Chunk down your mind map further.
- Cut off the outside legs and use the main stems to stimulate your brain to remember the other parts. This is useful to take into the exam.

4. MP3

- Take some of the key points from your lists/notes and condense them onto a Mp3 player
- Variety is important. Get other people to record bits so that you have variety of voice (family)
- Using background music may help, as some people have found that a particular piece reminds them of an associated topic.
- Use the tape for playback during 'dead time', i.e. on the bus, walking etc
- Record a bit each day and your recoding will soon fill up nicely

5. Song & Rhyme

- Making up catch phrases or rhymes can help with crucial bits of information.
Example: to help you sort out which is the x and the y axis on a graph you could remember ' x below y because y goes up high', cringe-worthy yes, scoring points in an exam, who cares about naff !
- Making up song and rhyme can be fun, sharing it with others even funnier

Youtube has great examples of useful songs students have made up for their learning <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hACAebpRQa0>

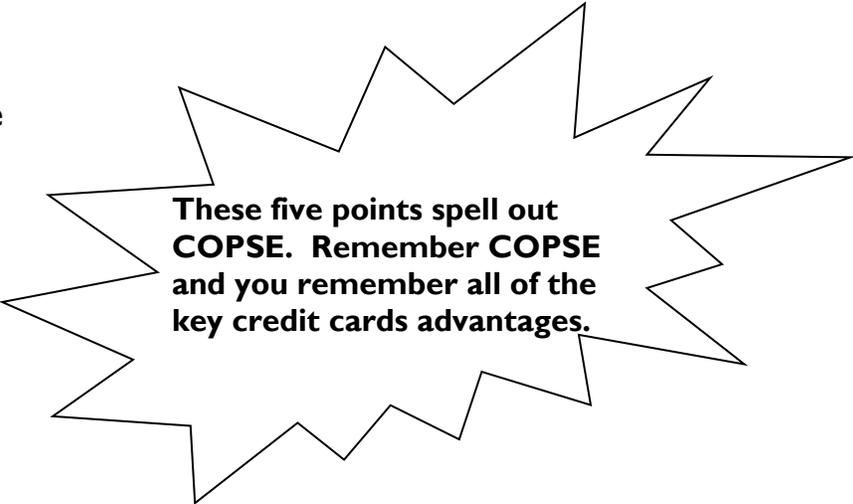
Convenient to carry

Outlets for use everywhere

Pay later

Security

Extras, insurance, air miles



**These five points spell out
COPSE. Remember COPSE
and you remember all of the
key credit cards advantages.**

REMEMBER

- If you have remembered your mnemonics and mind maps, it is not cheating to write them down on paper as soon as you get in the exam room.
- Make acronyms funny, personal or even rude if it helps. It is an excellent way of reducing a great deal of information into manageable chunks.

7. Flash Cards

- Research shows that when our brain is storing information our eyes are often angled upwards to the right or to the left (depending on how your brain is set up)
- Flash cards can be a big help in remembering important information
- Why not make some brightly coloured lists or just write down key words that you want to remember
- Try different colours for different topics/subjects



8. Wall Posters (large scale flash cards)

- Use the flash card idea to condense information onto large scale posters to put up in your bedroom or around your house. You will subconsciously remember key points as you look at these each day.
- Ask your family if you can use different rooms for different topic areas and put up posters. You could colour code each room ! The dining room could become maths, the kitchen science, the living room English and so on. As you move around the house you move through and open the different subject files !



9. Word Walls

- Following on from above, using the key terms and the language used in subjects is essential at GCSE. Why not have some of these scattered around the house/bedroom or on walls around the house (see number 8).

Clusters of key words for each topic area/subject are a great way to learn the language for your GCSE courses. Cover your walls with the phrases (and meanings) used in your courses.

Remember that using the right terminology will earn you more marks in the examination.

Use the right language !

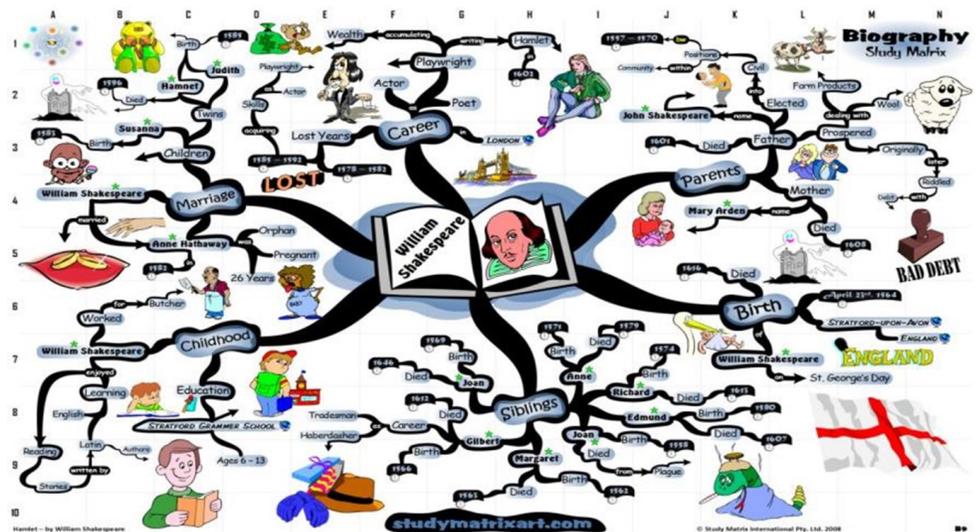
Economies of Scale

10. Lists, charts and notes

- More traditional methods still work !
- Bullet pointed lists are a good way to summarise information
- Visual methods including charts are excellent ways to memorise information, especially if they are large (big enough for your wall !)
- Concentrate on shrinking the information down as far as possible
- Eliminate excessive words from lists, focus on key terms

11. Visual & Pattern Notes

- Use more graphic images to help you revise and make things stick in your mind. This is a form of mind map with more images that will suit students that are more visual learners. Look at the picture below to get an idea of how you could summarise work and then revise from it.



<http://thinkbuzan.com> is a great website for creating mind maps

12. Fact Sheets

- Keep fact sheets of key information, dates, formulas etc to hand. You could use clipboards, ring binders or cards. This is like making revision cards but just for key bits of information that are essential.

13. List of Exam key words in courses

- Have a list of the key action words used in examination questions in your subject and have examples of how you could use them.
- Know critical words such as: analyse, compare, contrast, describe, justify, evaluate, account for, examine, outline, summarise, explain. Pay the same attention to these words as you would do for learning the content. Put on wall posters to familiarise yourself.

14. Study Buddy—Sharing Learning

- One of the most effective ways to learn is to teach someone else
- This helps you process information yourself as you explain it to others
- Use friends and family to test you—how do you know if you know it (move quickly away from the idea that if you have read something that you must know it—you probably don't!) You may be wasting your valuable revision time. A study buddy can help you here.
- Build in a testing EACH DAY to see how well you are learning/revising something

15. Practising Previous Exam Questions

- Test yourself against the real goal posts by doing past papers !
- These give you a great idea of the style of questions, how many questions in each section and timing
- It gives you an excellent experience of decoding the trigger words—what exactly are they asking you to do rather than answering a question as you want to. Understand the language !

Over 60% of all errors in exams are caused by not reading the question properly.



16. Show You Know

- Show yourself that you know your stuff !
- Don't fool yourself that you know something because you spent 2 hours reading it !
- How effective was that time spent ?
- Recite things out loud
- Write down lists after revising to see if you can recall things
- Stop yourself from eating that chocolate biscuit until you can provide that answer to yourself

You know something if you recall it whenever you want

You cannot be sure that you know something because you can recall it 30 seconds after reading it—that is fooling yourself.

Learn and re-learn

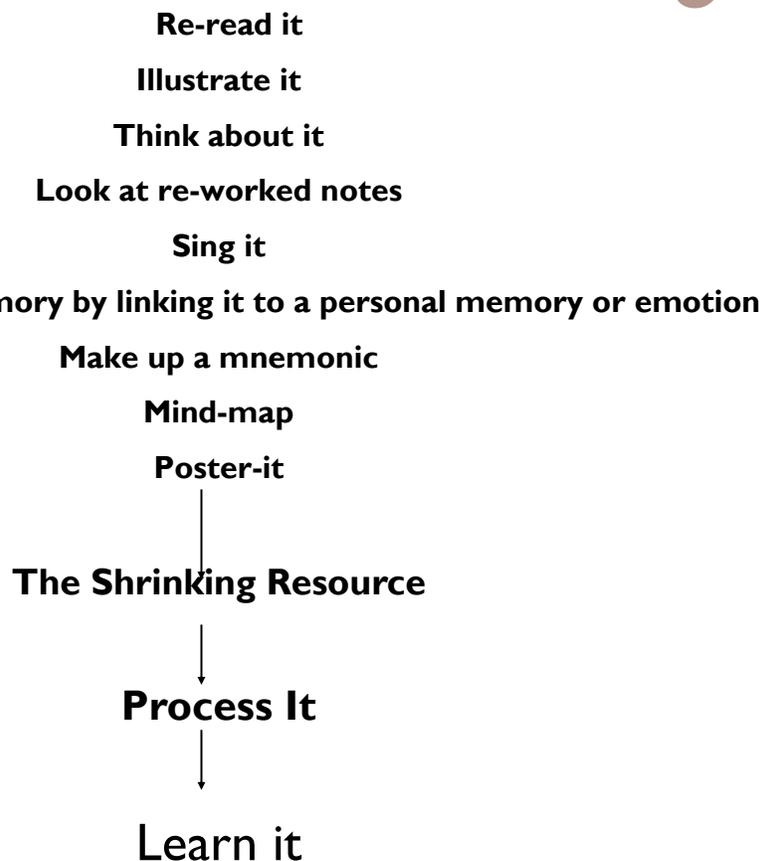
14. Revision Cards

- Some people like to condense information onto small revision cards
- These are portable and can be carried around
- Keep words to a minimum, key points only, don't over-crowd the card, it becomes difficult to read and visualise
- Have some organisation, i.e. one card per topic
- Use colour, use pictures, use bullet points
- Make it fun and use mnemonics to make it fun
- The process of carding up a topic is as important as reading the card later as it will help you revise



15. Take a break

- People learn best at the start and finish of each revision session, so have lots of starts and ends !
- The maximum time that you can concentrate is 40 minutes
- Reward yourself by finishing something and then taking 5 minutes out for a coffee—then back to it!





And some don'ts



- Don't kid yourself that you know something just because it seems familiar
- Don't revise with friends if you won't concentrate on work. If you are revising with friends make sure that it is the revising and testing that you are doing—you are only fooling yourself if you are not working. Friends are for life, GCSEs happen just once
- Don't fool yourself that you know something just because you have read it. Process it, learn it, test yourself against it
- Don't go on revising if you are tired. This is not profitable time and it will be better spent sleeping and picking up that time later. Give yourself a break, especially before bedtime and work to a plan, **not** adhoc (make it up as you go)
- Don't necessarily measure yourself against your friends—they learn in different ways, they may revise quicker or may not be telling you everything about the quantity of work.. If your friend hasn't done much either then feeling more confident is very short sighted—you both will fall short of your potential !

And Finally, some more tips

- Get your notes up to scratch and plug any gaps NOW
- Divide your work into sections/chunk down ready for revision (topic based) using file dividers
- Think about more than one subject at a time
- Revise several topics in one day/evening
- Chunk down
- Plan your time & stick to it
- Give yourself rewards
- Think of the long term benefits and not the short term !
- Believe in yourself

