

Saint **Ambrose** College

5th Year

**REVISION
GUIDE
2017**



This revision guide has been put together to help you to prepare for your GCSE examinations.

We hope that you will find it useful and helpful.

Remember – your teachers are here to help you and they want to support you in your learning and revision. So, if you get stuck, please ask for their help.

We wish you the very best of luck with your exams and we hope that you will be delighted with your results in August.

If you have any issues please email me mrpgroves@st-ambrosecollege.org.uk

Best wishes
the Staff of St Ambrose College

Heavenly Father,

**Only your peace can sustain me
through the anxiety and stresses of exam nerves.**

Your peace surpasses all understanding.

I ask for this gift and choose to lean upon you at this time.

Lord, come and remind me of your unfailing love.

Remind me that you hold me safe, you understand me, and you cherish me.

I lay down my fears before you.

I choose to give you all my concerns, worries and fears of failure.

**I trust that your loving hand will hold me through these exams and
lead into a bright future.**

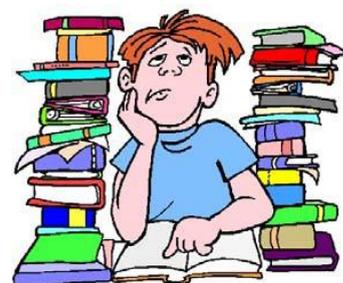
Amen

Summary of Contents:-

- Planning your revision
- How we learn
- Ideas for revision technique
- Preparation & exam technique
- Clue words in examination questions
- Last minute preparation
- Coping with stress

Planning your revision

- Before you start your revision it is essential that you know what needs to be revised in each subject. Often your subject teacher will provide you with a check list or exam specification which makes it clear which topics will be on which exam paper, or you can check the subject sections of this revision guide.
- Make a list of topics for each subject, and use this as a check list
- Hopefully, you have already prepared a revision timetable, if not, it would be wise to make one, in order to ensure that you revise for all subjects and do not run out of time. Place the timetable up on the wall at home where everyone can see it. Ask a family member to assist you in keeping to your timetable schedule.
NB: Your revision timetable must be realistic and flexible.
- Try to keep to your revision timetable but if you fall behind don't worry, just continue from where you were supposed to be. Do not spend more time writing another timetable.
- Keep to you plan you have plenty of time – if you act now.
- Build up the amount of time you spend on revision – a few hours to start, increasing to several hours a day close to the exams.
- Plan two-hour revision sessions when possible (but don't use this as an excuse not to revise if you haven't got a 2 hour 'window' of time)
- Each revision session should be broken down into 20-25 minute mini-sessions with 5-10 minute breaks in between. This is because your learning efficiency drops as time goes on, but increases after a short break. You will learn much more in four 25-minute mini-sessions than you will in one 2-hour marathon. This is illustrated on the graphs on pages 4.
- Plan to give yourself a 'reward' for doing a certain amount of revision i.e. watch your favourite television programme if you manage to revise for four sessions of 20-25 minutes with a five minute break in between each session. Do not allow yourself the 'reward' if you do not stick to your plan. Tell your family what your rewards are and ask them to help you keep to them.
- Try to build in regular reviews of work you have already revised. On pages 6 and 7 there are two graphs showing how the amount of information you can recall decreases over time. If you review the work you did straight after your 5-10 minute break, then again after one day, then again after one week, you will recall much more information for much longer.



Every week check if you are on task and then revise your plan as necessary.

Getting organised can make all the difference!

What's the right space for you?

Get the basics right:

- Comfortable chair and desk
- Good light, comfortable temperature
- Complete revision kit of:-
pens, coloured pencils and highlighter pens, paper, dividers and folders, post-its
dictionary, thesaurus, text books and revision guides
- Revision timetable planner
- Storage to keep your space tidy

Then begin to concentrate:

- Do not use social media as this can be distracting when revising. Do this in your schedule break only
- Let your family know your study timetable so you're not distracted
- Remember, useful concentration lasts only 30 – 40 minutes
- Then take a break of 5 – 10 minutes – drink water, text a friend, get some fresh air
Like anything else, concentration improves with practice.

Have you got a Study Buddy?

Working with a Study Buddy means questions and answers. This helps you (and your Study Buddy) interact with the information and work out what you know and what you don't.

Your Buddy also motivates you to study. It's easier to stay in and study if someone else is doing it with you.

- Pick someone reliable, someone you like and trust
- Plan in advance what you're going to discuss
- Share your summary sheets, mnemonics and other methods of remembering subject

Working with your Study Buddy

- Structure your meetings: study, discuss, study, discuss
- Teach your Study Buddy a subject, have them teach it back to you
- Stay in touch by phone and e-mail, support each other
- Check your revision planner for areas to focus on and plan for
- **DO NOT** get sidetracked, stay on task!

Know how to study

Do you read to succeed? The reading style you need depends on what you want to do.

- Get an overview of a subject
- Look for specific facts
- Clarify something you don't understand
- Collect information for an essay answer

Skim reading:

If you want to know if a particular text is useful to you, get an overview of the subject or look for specific facts, don't waste time reading every word; skim read instead:

- First, check headings, subheads, graphs, captions, bullet points – make sure the text is useful to you
- Read first and last paragraphs, they usually introduce and summarise the text
- Skim the whole text, highlighting key words, making brief margin notes and symbols (but only if it's in your book)
- Summarise the whole text in no more than two paragraphs
- Make a note of anything you don't understand and ask your Study Buddy or Teacher

Review your work:

If you don't review your work, studies show you'll lose 80% of what you've learned in 24 hours and 98% in seven days. So take 20 minutes each day to review everything you've learned.



How we learn

If you had a list of nonsense 3-letter words right now, how long do you think you would remember them? How long could you remember at least half of them?

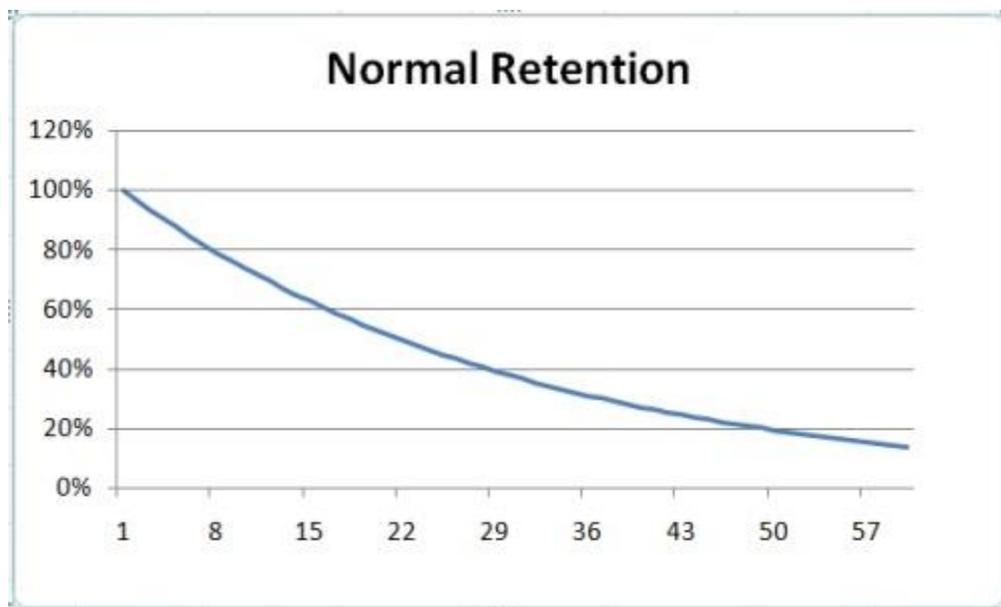
In 1885, Hermann Ebbinghaus did this exact experiment – and his results are widely accepted as a general theory for how we learn and retain information. Graphing his results, he developed a formula for how long items remain in our memory. Some people may remember better than others, but the general trend for how long we retain information is the same.

The resulting graph is called **Ebbinghaus' Forgetting Curve**.

According to Ebbinghaus, the level at which we retain information depends on a couple of things:

- the strength of your memory
- the amount of time that has passed since learning

It's easier to see in a graph:



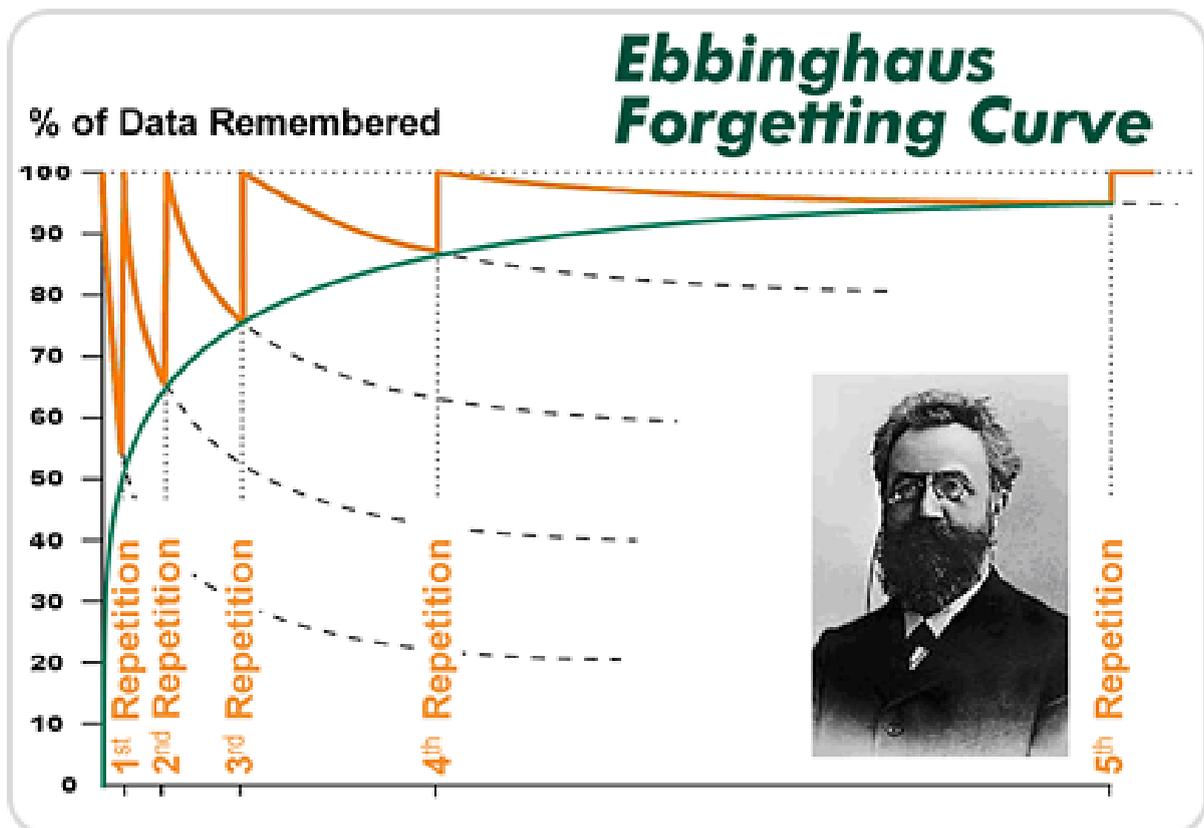
Your unique memory strength will determine whether you retain half the information for 3 weeks (as in the graph above) or more, or less. Depending on what you've learned, there are estimates that say we forget 90% within the first month – or even first week!

There are two primary factors that affect our level of retention for items in our long term memory:

- repetition
- quality of memory representation

The more frequently we repeat something, the more likely it is to stick. For this reason, one suggestion given to improve memory retention when taking a class is to review your notes and classwork regularly. Research has shown that reviewing at regular intervals does increase retention and, that over time, less frequent review is needed.

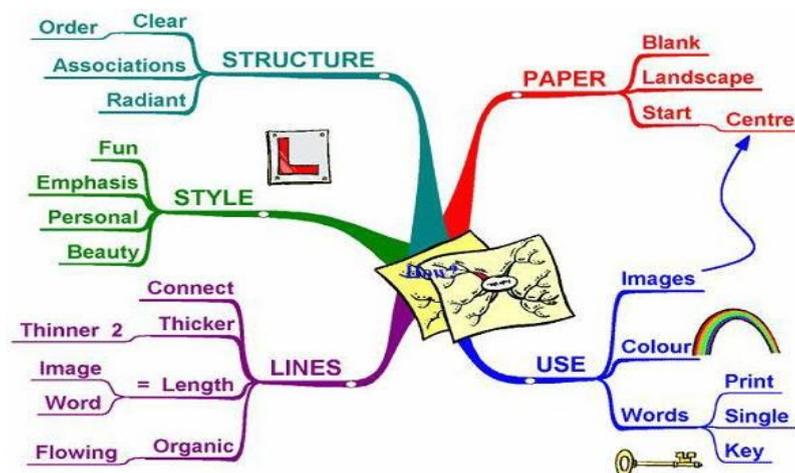
Below is how the graph looks if you review what you learn several times:



Frequent review does help retention but, also, the more relevant, meaningful connections you can make with the new information in your mind with things you already know, the better your memory retention will be over time.

Ideas for Revision Technique

- Write out definitions of key words. Put each key word on a card with its definition on the other side. Spread the cards out with key words face up. Start with the first one and try to remember its definition. Turn the card over to check if you're right. If you are, leave it turned over; if wrong, turn it back to the key word again. Move on to the next card and repeat. Go through all the cards in this way, and repeat until all the cards are turned over. Repeat each time you revise the topic. This can work for definitions, facts, physics equations, etc.
- Condense and re-condense your notes. In revision notes you are picking out the most important points and trying to reduce the amount of information to a more manageable amount.
- Make sure your notes are well spaced out.
- Make revision cards on a topic – use them on the bus etc. Revision cards should have the subject on, and a title, as well as the basic notes. Keep sets of cards together with string or elastic bands threaded through a hole in the top left hand corner.
- Use colour, boxes, circles, underlining, and abbreviations.
- Use revision guides, but not as a substitute for writing your own revision notes.
- Create a mind map on a topic – this is one way of making notes.



- When going through your revision notes, read them, put them face down, then write out (or redraw in the case of a mind/revision map) what you can remember. Compare what you have written down to the original notes. Check for what you have missed out.
- Use mnemonics.
- Study buddies – agree on a topic, take turns to say what you can remember with someone acting as scribe.

- Pretend to teach someone else – even if it's the cat or your own reflection!
- Use revision websites like www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize. Bitesize has condensed notes, tests, games, podcasts and a mind mapping facility (they call it a revision map). Other useful websites include www.revision-notes.co.uk/GCSE.
- Do as many past paper questions as you can. Make sure you sometimes do these under timed conditions.
- Get anyone who's willing to test you – mum, dad, granny, whoever.
- Write key points on 'post-it' notes and stick them to things around the house.

Clas 2.2: **Extracting Iron**

How a blast furnace works.
Hot air is blown into the blast furnace. This makes the coke burn, which heats the furnace and forms carbon dioxide gas.

We extract iron using a blast furnace. This is a large container made of steel lined with heatproof bricks.

Haematite is the most common iron ore. It contains mainly iron oxide (III) (Fe_2O_3) and sand.

At the high temperatures in the blast furnace, this carbon dioxide reacts again with the coke to form carbon monoxide gas.

Some of the molten iron is left to solidify in moulds – we call this cast iron – It contains about 96% iron. Most of the iron is kept molten to be turned into steel. We make steel by removing more of the impurities from iron. Then we mix it with other elements to change its properties.

Hot waste gases used to heat air to preheat furnace. The carbon monoxide reacts with the iron oxide, removing its oxygen, and reducing it to molten iron. This flows to the bottom of the blast furnace.

- Write giant-size notes on large sheets of paper or strips of leftover wallpaper and stick them up in your bedroom.
- Annotation - take a blank copy of a poem and annotate it again as a way of testing your knowledge and understanding. Refine your annotations. Are they brief and useful? Remember that annotations should not be translations of meaning but comments on ideas or effects, and that they can be pictures, images as well as words.
- Plan answers to essay questions. What are your key points and which quotations will you use?
- Essay writing: Write all or parts of practice essays (sometimes under timed conditions). Re-write essays you wrote in class, acting on the teacher's advice and subsequent revision in order to improve. Write the plans for essays you have already written. Write the introduction and conclusion of an essay. Assess your writing using the marking criteria.

Preparation & Exam techniques

- Get a good night's sleep
- Have a nourishing breakfast and drink water – dehydration and lack of food to start the day damages concentration
- Get to school early. You'll be in a state if you arrive late. Remember panic is pointless.
- Make sure you have a watch so that you can time your writing, and all the equipment you will need for each exam, such as colouring pencils, calculator, anthology, texts etc
- While you are waiting for everyone to settle, read the front of the exam booklet and check how many questions you have to answer. How many from each section?
- How long does this allow for each question?
- Underline important information
- Read the question paper carefully all the way through at least twice
- Choose carefully which questions to answer. If you haven't studied it, don't attempt to write about it!
- Underline keywords in the questions, this tells you which points the examiner wants you to write about
- Don't panic if your mind goes blank. Once you start jotting down ideas, it will all come back to you
- Decide which question you can do best and do it first; this will boost your confidence
- Start first with the questions that carry the most marks
- Jot relevant ideas in the answer book – you can cross these notes out later. Examiners like planning!
- Sort these ideas into a logical order. Put a number by each point to indicate the order

- State the obvious! The examiner won't assume you know something that is not written down. If there are four lines in the answer book, try to fill the space with your answer. Try to write legibly – if the examiners can't read it they can't give you marks! Make sure you leave at least five minutes at the end of the exam to go over what you have written. You can save marks by correcting mistakes
- Don't bother with post mortems outside the exam hall. You've done your best. Physically and mentally, pack up your revision notes for that subject and move on to the next subject.
- Using past papers: How do past papers improve your exam technique?
- Exams are like anything else – the more you do, the better you get. That's why past papers are so important to your exam preparation.

Get to know:

- Their layout, names/numbers of questions?
- The format of instructions?
- The range of questions: multiple choice, short answers, essays, etc?
- The marking scheme?
- The pace of the paper, how should you allocate time?
- Which type of question turns up most often?



CLUE WORDS IN EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

<u>Analyse</u>	Means to show the main ideas and show how they are related and why they are important
<u>Comment on</u>	Means to discuss, criticise or explain it's meaning as completely as possible
<u>Compare</u>	Means to show both the similarities and the differences
<u>Contrast</u>	Means to compare by showing the difference
<u>Criticise</u>	Means to give your judgement or reasoned opinion or something, showing its good and bad points. It's not necessary to attack it
<u>Define</u>	Means to give the formal meaning by distinguishing it from related terms. This is often a matter of giving a memorised definition
<u>Describe</u>	Means to write a detailed account or verbal picture in a logical sequence or story form
<u>Diagram</u>	Means to make a graph, chart, or drawing . Be sure that you label it and add a brief explanation if it is needed
<u>Discuss</u>	Means to describe, giving the details and explaining the pros and cons of it
<u>Enumerate</u>	Means to list. Name and list the main ideas one by one and number them
<u>Evaluate</u>	Means to give your opinion or some expert's opinion of the truth or importance of a concept. Tell the advantages and disadvantages
<u>Explain</u>	The focus is on understanding. The word 'explain' means that you have to give reasons. Expand on the main points with reasons or examples.
<u>Illustrate</u>	Means to explain or make clear by concrete examples, comparisons or analogies
<u>Interpret</u>	Means to give the meaning using examples and personal comments to make it clear
<u>Justify</u>	Means to give a statement of why you think it is so . Give reasons for your statement and conclusion
<u>List</u>	See enumerate
<u>Outline</u>	Means to give a general summary. It should contain a series of main ideas supported by secondary ideas. Omit minor details . See the organisation of your ideas
<u>Prove</u>	Means to show by argument or logic that it is true (the word 'prove' has a very special meaning in mathematics and physics)
<u>Relate</u>	Means to show the connections between things telling how one causes or is like another
<u>Review</u>	Means to give a survey or summary in which you look at the important parts and criticise where necessary
<u>State</u>	Means to describe the main points in precise terms. Be formal. Use brief clear sentences. Omit details or examples
<u>Summarise</u>	Means to give a brief , condensed account of the main ideas . Omit details and examples
<u>Trace</u>	Means to follow the progress or history of a subject

The clue words underlined and typed in bold are those instructions, which are most frequently used in examinations.

LAST MINUTE PREPARATION

THE EVENING BEFORE THE EXAMINATION

- Check all equipment/supplies
- Finish intense work by 8 pm.
- Exercise – work off stress (run, walk, swim, vigorous exercise)

EVENING TIMETABLE

- 8.45 Review all topics for the next day's examination
- 9.25 Have plenty of relaxation. Try to clear your mind and be cheerful!
- 10.00 Overview your topics and check all your equipment, etc.
- 10.30 Sleep (you need eight hours)

MORNING OF THE EXAMINATION

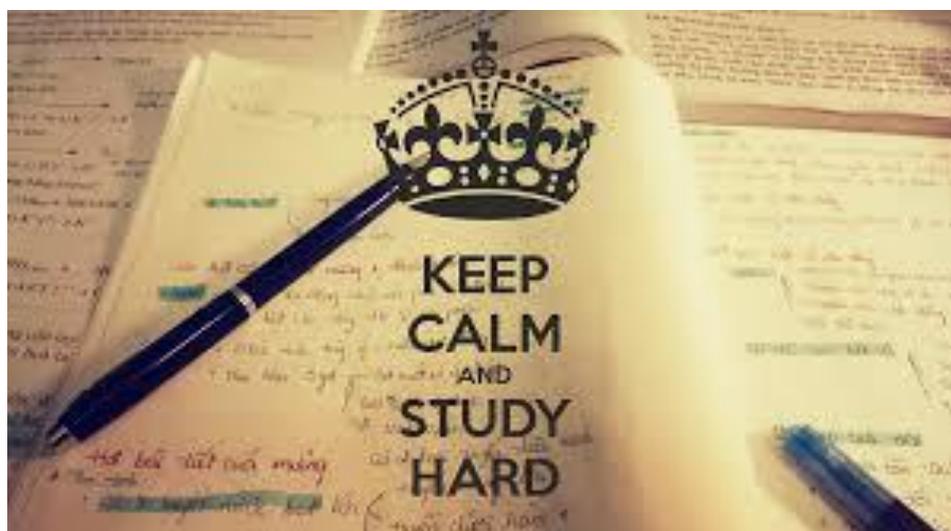
- Get up early – allow time to do all the things you need to do without rushing.
- Run/swim/stretch/exercise/freshen up!
- Review all topics.
- Focus on a positive state of mind.
- Collect your thoughts.
- Breakfast – it's very important to make sure your body and brain have fuel.

YOUR ESSENTIAL EXAMINATION KIT: FEEDING YOUR BRAIN

For breakfast, have some cereal and fruit juice, and for lunch salads, fish and pasta are good. Take some water in a small plastic bottle into the examination with you.

EQUIPMENT

Check you have enough pens, pencils, colours, rubber and a ruler. Also – Maths equipment, calculator, any texts you're allowed, dictionary and so on. Make sure your watch works and is accurate. Keep an eye on the examination hall clock and synchronise your watch with it.



COPING WITH STRESS

There is no doubt that any form of worry, anxiety or stress will block your learning channel and dramatically influence your ability to revise. Your subconscious mind is reacting to “outside” pressures.

Stress is a build up of tension, anxiety and strain. Everyone experiences stress and some can cope with stress easier than others but failing to cope is not a sign of weakness. You can train yourself to be better at controlling stress.



THERE ARE A NUMBER OF WAYS TO HELP COPE WITH STRESS

- Constructive self-talk.
- Increase oxygen input - deep breathing.
- Plan and organise daily routine, mid-term targets. Use a diary and have an overview.
- Exercise, diet, sleep patterns should be balanced with your work pressure.
- Predict the tough times; focus on your long-term goals.
- Listen to relaxing music.
- Give yourself credit when you are doing it right.
- Build in rewards – and intend to enjoy them.
- Seek help – supportive people are reassuring and great for confidence.
- Know how to say “no” to those who distract or interrupt you.
- Smile and find people who make you laugh.

MENTAL PREPARATION BEFORE THE DAY OF THE EXAMINATION

- Smile ☺
- Think yourself in the examination...ask typical questions: “How would I answer...?”
- Think of your past successes.
- Remember you know much more than you think you do.
- Relax and let the knowledge flow.
- Reaffirm venue and time of examinations.

THE EXAMINATION - TIPS AND TECHNIQUES

Set off for the examination after you’ve spent some time on mental preparation; get into the right frame of mind to tackle the work ahead. Take a brisk walk to the examination room and try to arrive about 5 minutes before the start. If you get there too early you’ll have time to start feeling anxious; if you arrive later you’ll feel rushed and unprepared.

ENTER THE EXAMINATION ROOM

- Set out your equipment.
- Focus on the future – what has motivated you all along?
- Relax and focus on the questions and topics you've practised.
- Try some brain exercises.
- Drink a little water.
- Calm down... a few deep breaths.
- Be confident, think positively – believe in yourself.
- If in doubt about anything, ask the invigilator.

FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS

- Listen to the invigilator. (There can be change to instructions.)
- Read written instructions carefully, they will tell you: time; choice of questions; type of answer; number of marks.
- Fill in Examination Centre details and your name.
- Number the first page.
- Read all the questions. Eliminate those you don't want to do. Choose very carefully because each question deserves time – you will realise you can do it after all.
- Think about a general plan for the examination.
- Follow all instructions to the letter.

PLANNING YOUR TIME

Read the question – two to three times... slowly.

REMEMBER HOW YOU'VE BEEN ADVISED TO PLAN THE EXAMINATION

- Reading time
- Planning time
- Time for each answer
- Checking time



WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DON'T PLAN YOUR TIME?

- You rush answers and panic.
- You leave answers or miss obvious questions.
- Your memory doesn't react – so you begin to feel worried.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU FALL BEHIND IN YOUR PLAN?

- Don't panic: reduce each answer time – you can do it!
- Go into note form if absolutely necessary.
- Try to finish each question – show your working out if you have to.

WHAT IS A “GOOD ANSWER?”

A GOOD ANSWER... comes from a well-revised topic

Is the result of a well-understood question

Is often anticipated in revision

Is planned carefully

Is relevant – and answers the question

Is clearly written and makes sense

Is presented well

Is produced in the way you've been taught

Is concluded and is checked

Pleases you!

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOUR MIND GOES BLANK?

Panic and anxiety only lessen your chances of choosing the right question/point, so focus on being calmer and try to clear your head.

- Relaxation techniques do help.
- Massage the neurovascular points on your forehead.
- Focus your breathing: deep breaths.
- Don't spend too long trying to remember a point – leave a space or a line. Come back to it later.
- Keep writing. Jot any ideas or thoughts on rough paper.
- Ask yourself questions, then try again.

IN BETWEEN EXAMINATIONS IF YOU HAVE TWO ON ONE DAY

- Get some fresh air – and move around.
- A possible plan is:
 - Lunch – 20 minutes.
 - Switch off – 15 minutes.
- Focused review for 30 minutes.
- Relax. Remember... you can cope.
- Treat the afternoon as a “new day”.

GOOD LUCK GENTLEMEN

