



**MEDEN**  
SCHOOL



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# Effective Revision Habits and Strategies

A guide for students and parents

# Retrieval Practice

“**Retrieval practice** is a learning strategy where we focus on getting information out. Through the act of retrieval, or calling information to mind, our memory for that information is strengthened and forgetting is less likely to occur. Retrieval practice is a powerful tool for improving learning.”



- Use your class notes & textbooks to make a list of the important information & content that you need to know across different subjects.
- Then close your books & test yourself. You can create quizzes, use flashcards or complete past exam papers. **Make sure you don't use your notes!**
- Retrieve as much information as you can then check your answers. It's important to know what you know and what you don't know ... yet!
- Use your answers to inform the next stage of your revision, focus on the areas that you struggled to recall from memory.

# Spaced Practice

“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.”

This is **spaced practice** & it is regarded as one of the most effective revision strategies.

The human brain doesn't want to have to think hard and will take all kinds of shortcuts in order to avoid it. This usually results in putting things off until you have no other option but to do it last minute. By spacing out your revision in smaller chunks over a period of time, you will remember that material far better and will also be a lot less stressed.

Let's say you have a test one week and you have 5 hours to prepare for it broken down into 30-minute chunks. Very often that process looks like this.



- mass practice or cramming
- the least effective ways of learning anything.
- material is quickly forgotten
- If, for example, you do this for a mock exam in March, it's highly likely you will not retain any of what you have learned by June and will have to do the whole process again.

Instead of mass practice, a much more effective way of revising is to space out your revision like this:



By breaking up your revision into 30-minute chunks and spacing out the time between revision, you will consolidate what you have learned and retain the material much more effectively.

# Concrete Examples

“Students often gain a false sense of confidence in their abilities to memorise new material. Using **concrete**, relevant, real life examples can help students understand abstract ideas and extend information retention.”



Concrete examples involves finding & using specific examples to help develop & deepen understanding of abstract ideas.

Abstract ideas can be difficult to understand & explain. Our memories find it easier to remember concrete examples better than abstract information.

Foreshadowing can be explained with a very specific concrete example - in Romeo & Juliet the tragic ending is subtly foreshadowed in the very first act of the play.

Look through your books & class notes searching for concrete examples that are relevant to the idea you are studying or create your own if you can.

# Elaboration

“The term **elaboration** can be used to mean a lot of different things. However, when we are talking about studying using elaboration, it involves explaining and describing ideas with many details. Elaboration also involves making connections among ideas you are trying to learn.”



Elaboration involves asking further questions & making links to help you connect new information with what you already know.

Ask yourself questions about a topic to delve deeper. The more information you have about a specific topic the stronger your grasp & ability to recall.

When you learn about the causes of WW1 you could ask which causes are linked together? Which causes are short or long term? What was the major cause?

Another way to elaborate is to take two ideas or concepts & think about the various ways they are similar & how they are different.

# Interleaving

“**Interleaving** is a process where students mix & combine multiple subjects & topics while they study in order to improve their learning. Blocked practice on the other hand, involves studying one topic very thoroughly before moving to another. Interleaving has been shown to be more effective than blocked practice leading to better long-term retention.”

For example, instead of organising your revision week like this:

M	T	W	T	F
MACBETH	AN INSPECTOR CALLS	CREATIVE WRITING	UNSEEN POETRY	JEKYLL AND HYDE
MACBETH	AN INSPECTOR CALLS	CREATIVE WRITING	UNSEEN POETRY	JEKYLL AND HYDE
MACBETH	AN INSPECTOR CALLS	CREATIVE WRITING	UNSEEN POETRY	JEKYLL AND HYDE

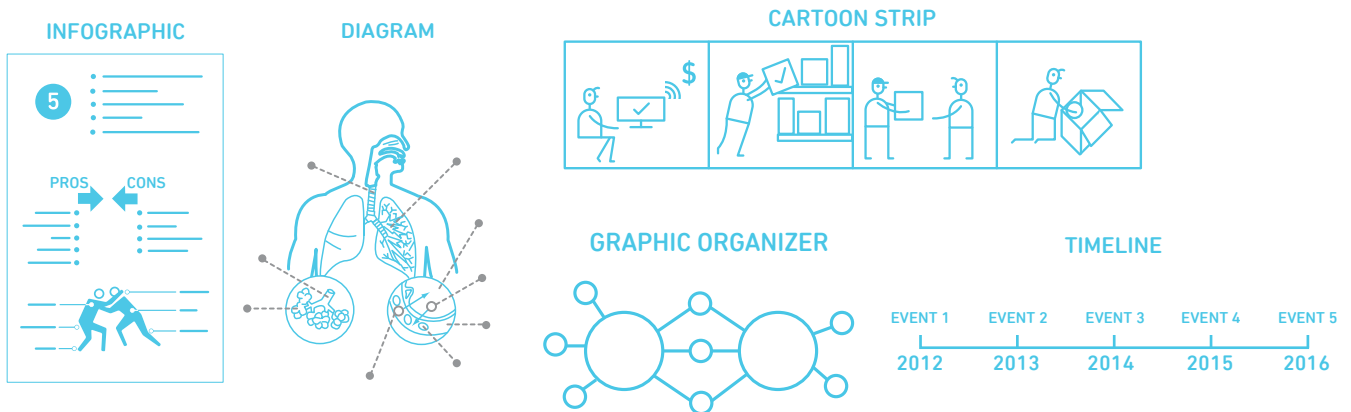
A much more effective way of organising your revision would be like this:

M	T	W	T	F
MACBETH	UNSEEN POETRY	AN INSPECTOR CALLS	JEKYLL AND HYDE	CREATIVE WRITING
AN INSPECTOR CALLS	JEKYLL AND HYDE	CREATIVE WRITING	MACBETH	UNSEEN POETRY
CREATIVE WRITING	MACBETH	UNSEEN POETRY	AN INSPECTOR CALLS	JEKYLL AND HYDE

Studying one topic for a long time can give them impression you have mastered it but often this can be misleading.

# Dual Coding

“**Dual coding** is the process of combining verbal materials with visual materials. There are many ways to visually represent materials, such as with infographics, timelines, cartoon/comic strips, diagrams and graphic organisers.”



Dual coding involves you the learner drawing images, graphs, diagrams or timelines to support your revision notes.

When you are revising using your class materials find or create visuals that link with the information. Compare & combine the visuals with the words.

Don't worry if you don't consider yourself an artist - it isn't about the quality of your illustrations, the focus is to improve and deepen your understanding.

Make sure your images/diagrams are relevant. Be careful when using photos as too many background images can detract from the main points.



# Exam vocabulary - Command words

There will be subject specific key terms that you need to learn for each subject. Below are a range of **command words** that could be used in your exams. Do you understand what the exam question is asking you? Command words can vary slightly across different subjects so it is important you understand the command words in the exam question & in the correct context.

**Analyse** - Examine something in detail and try to explain or interpret it.

**Annotate** - Add to a diagram, image or piece of text to illustrate or describe features rather than just identify them which is labelling.

**Assess** - Consider different options/arguments/factors and weigh them up to reach a conclusion about their effectiveness or validity.

**Calculate** - Work out the value of something.

**Compare** - Give a point by point identification of similarities and differences.

**Define** - This means *what is meant by ...* give the precise meaning of a term or concept.

**Describe** - Provide an account in detail of an event/individual/concept etc.

**Discuss** - Set out both sides of an argument & reach a conclusion, including evidence.

**Evaluate** - Consider different options/factors & reach a conclusion about their importance/impact/value/worth.

**Examine** - Consider carefully & provide a detailed account of the topic.

**Explain** - Provide a detailed description or interpretation of a term/concept etc.

**Identify** - Point out & name from a number of possibilities.

**Illustrate** - Refer to a specific case study or example (not illustrate as in draw).

**Label** - Point out specific features on a diagram, image or piece of text.

**Justify** - Explain why your selected choice/judgement is better than other options.

**Summarise** - Sum up the main points/arguments this can be the similar to outline.



# Well-being during exams

The exam period can be stressful that is why it's very important that you revise & prepare as this can help to reduce exam anxiety. In addition to revising there are other strategies you can do to look after your **mental & physical health**.



**Eat.** Diet is important so don't neglect it during the exam period. Don't skip meals, stay consistent with a healthy balance of meals & stay hydrated.

**Sleep.** Staying up late to revise is a bad idea! Sleep deprivation can have a very negative impact on concentration, performance & memory.

**Exercise.** Take regular breaks from revision with exercise. Take part in a sport you enjoy, go for a walk or any activity that is active & part of your daily routine.

**Relax.** Relax during the exam period? Yes! It is essential that you do make time to switch off & have a break. Watch Netflix, read or talk to friends.

# Get yourself organised

- Start early – Don't leave it to the last minute
- Plan your time
- Avoid distractions – NO PHONES
- Use the Study Skills in this booklet
- Take breaks and look after yourself

**Organise your revision time**

Balancing studying with the fun stuff in life can be difficult. Revising can get in the way of everything from meeting friends to relaxing after school.

Building a revision plan helps you manage your time more effectively. It gives you a clear idea of what subjects and topics you'll be revising each day and helps you organise your studies around your life.

**The Study Planner:**

- ✓ Builds revision sessions around your life
- ✓ Automatically adds revision sessions for you
- ✓ Reminders of revision sessions

**Get started. It's free**

	Mon 20th	Tue 21st	Wed 22nd	Thu 23rd	Fri 24th	Sat 25th	Sun 26th
09:00 - 10:00	GCSE Law	AS Mathematics	AS Psychology	AS Biology	AS Psychology	Lie in	Lie in
10:00 - 11:00	AS Mathematics	AS Mathematics	add activity	add activity	add activity	Badminton	AS Psychology
11:00 - 12:00	AS English Literature (AQA)	Free time	AS Biology	GCSE Law	AS English Literature		add activity
12:00 - 13:00	AS Mathematics (Edexcel)	add activity	add activity	AS English Literature (AQA)	add activity	AS Biology	AS Mathematics (Edexcel)
13:00 - 14:00	Edexcel Maths revision	AS English Literature	add activity	AS Biology	Lunch with Izzy	AS Biology	add activity
14:00 - 15:00	AS Biology	Free time	GCSE Law	AS Psychology	add activity	AS Psychology	add activity
15:00 - 16:00	Individual help	Free time	AS Psychology	AS Mathematics	AS Biology	AS Psychology	Free time
16:00 - 17:00	add activity	add activity	AS Psychology	add activity	add activity	AS Mathematics (Edexcel)	Sarah's birthday
17:00 - 18:00	add activity	add activity	GCSE Law	add activity	add activity	GCSE Law	add activity
18:00 - 19:00	Play rehearsal	add activity	GCSE Law	Play rehearsal			
	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner

The 'get revising' website is great for organising how you are going to revise. It is totally free, and you can start by producing your own revision timetable.

Check it out:

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