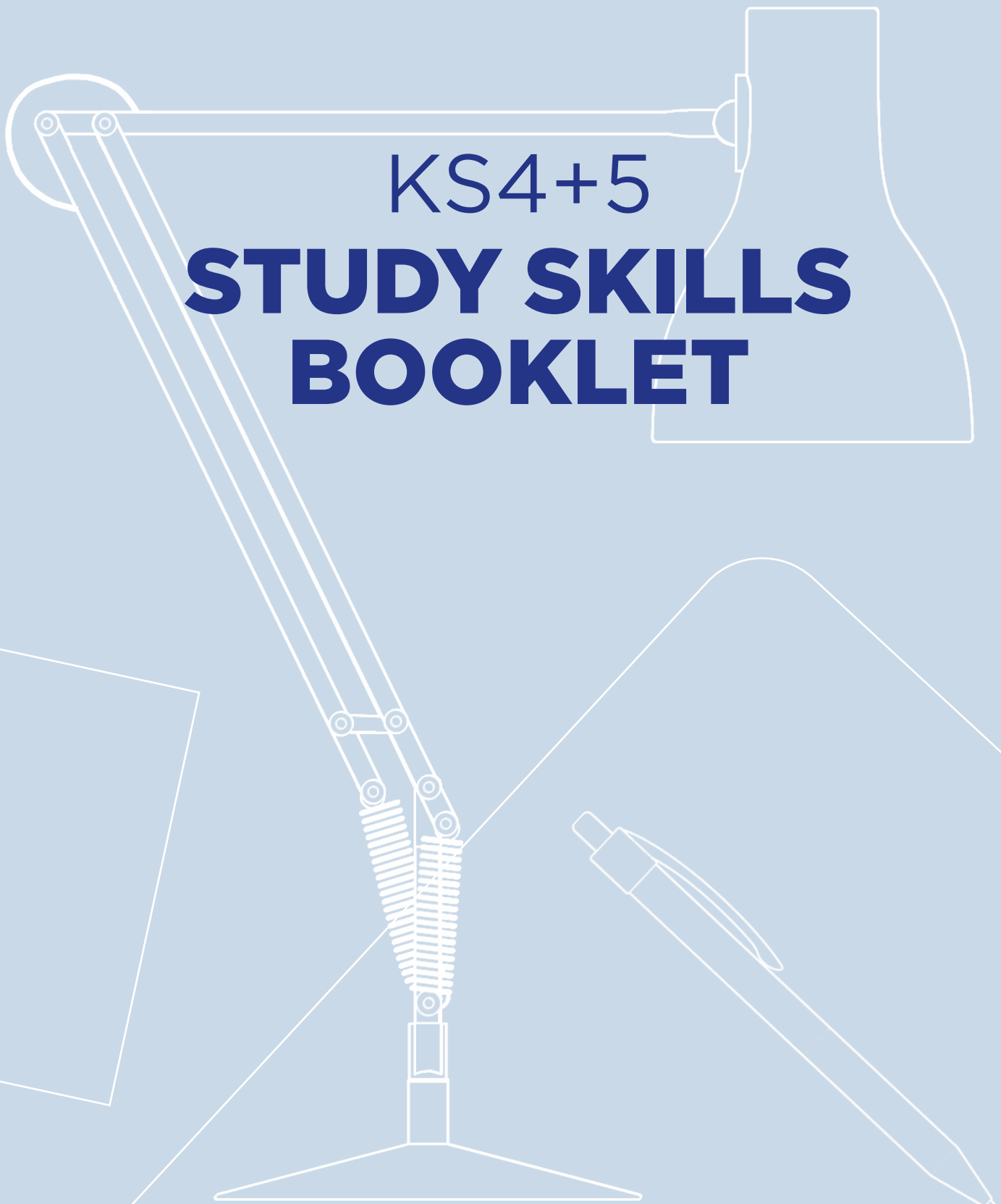




FRANCIS HOLLAND  
SLOANE SQUARE

KS4+5  
**STUDY SKILLS  
BOOKLET**





FRANCIS HOLLAND  
SLOANE SQUARE

# CONTENTS

Your Form Tutors will guide you through each section during form time at the appropriate points throughout the year.

Organisation and Planning.....	4
Bag Packing.....	6
Pencil Case Equipment List.....	7
Prep.....	8
Emails.....	9
Time Management.....	10
Making Effective Use of Private Study Periods.....	13
Looking After Yourself.....	14
Motivation and Procrastination.....	17
Dynamic Reading.....	19
Note Taking .....	20
Spaced Learning.....	22
Assessments.....	24
Revision Top Tips.....	25
Mind Mapping.....	30
Flow Charts .....	32
Flash Cards.....	34
Memory Techniques.....	38
Test Yourself.....	40
Exam Tips.....	42
Revision Timetable.....	44
The Brain Science Behind Effective Study Skills.....	46

# ORGANISATION AND PLANNING



## The Power of Being Prepared

- Planning helps you feel in control and reduces stress.
- You'll know what needs doing, when it's due, and how to prioritise.
- It's more efficient - less time spent worrying, more time spent working.

## Why Planning Works

- You won't forget assignments.
- You'll allow enough time for everything.
- You can focus on trickier subjects earlier.
- You'll feel less overwhelmed.

## What Happens Without a Plan

- You'll waste time deciding what to do next.
- You might run out of time or forget something important.
- Stress levels can rise when things feel chaotic.

## Organisation Top Tips

- 1. Keep your notes and books sorted by subject** so you can easily find what you need.
- 2. Write a to-do list and prioritise tasks** - start with what's urgent or tricky. Use a physical or digital planner!
- 3. Make sure you have all the stationery you need** - pens, paper, calculator, etc. Being prepared means less faffing and more focus.
- 4. Aim to arrive at school by 8:10am.** It gives you time to settle in and prepare for the day without feeling rushed.
- 5. Create a term planner.** For deadlines, assessments, and revision blocks.
- 6. Use digital tools** like OneNote, OneDrive and Teams to organise notes.
- 7. Plan for coursework milestones and mock exams early.**
- 8. Use schemes of work or exam specifications** to guide your planning - tick off topics as you revise.
- 9. Use digital calendars and reminders** for deadlines.
- 10. Wear a watch** - it helps you stay on time for lessons and activities.
- 11. If you're absent, be proactive.** Ask your teacher what you missed and catch up quickly.
- 12. Keep a copy of your timetable** in your bag, locker, and at home. Make it your screen saver!
- 13. Use a timer when doing prep** to avoid spending too long on one task.
- 14. Try to complete prep on the night it's set** - it's fresher in your mind and avoids a last-minute rush.
- 15. File your work and stick in sheets before the end of the lesson** to keep everything neat and organised.
- 16. Balance prep and clubs** - take advantage of opportunities, but don't overload yourself. Your Form Tutors can help advise.
- 17. If you're struggling with a topic, ask for help.** Go to subject clinics or speak to your teacher for extra support.
- 18. Don't be afraid to ask questions** - in lessons, after class, via email, or by popping into the staff room or office.
- 19. Check your emails and Teams notifications daily.** Make it a habit - for example, right before starting your prep.
- 20. Set a regular routine for homework and revision.** Having a consistent time each day helps build good habits and reduces procrastination.
- 21. Declutter your bag weekly.** Remove old papers, organise your folders, and check you have everything you need for the week ahead.
- 22. Use folders or dividers for each subject.** This makes it easier to keep track of handouts, notes, and prep.
- 23. Review your planner at the end of each day.** Check what's coming up tomorrow and make sure you're prepared.
- 24. Reflect weekly on what's working.** What helped you stay organised this week? What could you improve next week?

# BAG PACKING

Packing your bag the night before helps you feel prepared and reduces stress in the morning. Use your *timetable*, *planner* and *weekly study schedule* to make sure you've got everything you need.

## Evening Prep Routine

- Lay out your uniform and pack your bag before bed.
- Check your planner and timetable to make sure you've packed everything for the next day.
- Include anything needed for co-curriculars like sports, music, or clubs.
- Check the weather forecast - pack an umbrella or extra layer if needed.
- Charge your device overnight so it's ready for the day ahead.



## Bag Packing Checklist

- Pencil case
- Planner
- Device and charger
- Paper
- Water bottle
- Reading book
- Snacks
- Travel card
- School ID lanyard
- Money
- Mobile phone
- Yondr pouch (KS4)
- Prep due (check Teams)
- Books (check your timetable)
- PE kit (check the changing policy)
- Items for co-curriculars (e.g. music or ballet - check your study schedule)
- Small emergency kit (e.g. tissues, hand sanitiser, sanitary products)
- Include exam essentials during assessment periods (e.g. clear pencil case and spare pens)
- If you commute, keep revision cards or notes for quick review

## Smart Packing Tips

- **Avoid over-packing** - protect your back by removing unnecessary items.
- **Keep a spare pencil case at home.**
- **Use a wallet or folder** for prep sheets so you don't need to carry full books or files.
- Use **compartments or pouches** to group similar items (e.g. stationery, snacks, tech).
- Do a **weekly bag clean-out** to remove clutter and stay organised.
- Keep a spare charger or **essentials at home** in case you forget something.



## PENCIL CASE EQUIPMENT LIST

- Black pens
- Green pen
- Purple pen (if eligible for extra time)
- Highlighters
- HB pencils
- Scientific calculator
- Protractor
- Compass
- Ruler
- Rubber
- Sharpener
- Whiteboard pen
- Glue stick
- Colouring pencils

# PREP

Prep is designed to help you build independence, reinforce learning, and develop good study habits - without overwhelming your evenings.

## Prep Expectations by Year Group

**GCSE** 9 hours per week (2 x 30 minutes per subject per week)

**Lower Sixth** 5 hours per subject per week

**Upper Sixth** 6 hours per subject per week

## How to Manage Your Prep

Prep will be explained in lessons and set on Teams - ask if you have any questions.

- **Always note the due date** so you can plan ahead and avoid last-minute stress.
- **Use a timer or watch** to help you stick to the recommended time for each task.
- **Use Pomodoro technique** (25 mins work, 5 mins break) for focus.
- **Prioritise** tasks by exam weighting and deadlines.
- **If you finish early, use the extra time to:**
  - *Make extra notes*
  - *Read around the topic*
  - *Complete enrichment or extension tasks*
  - *Review feedback from previous work to improve future prep*

## Staying Motivated

- Create a calm, distraction-free space; avoid working in bed or near your phone.
- Build a routine by starting prep at the same time each evening.

## If You're Struggling

- If a deadline feels unmanageable, speak to your teacher **early** to discuss a possible extension.
- If you're stuck on a task, ask for help - in class, after school, at clinic or via email.



# EMAILS

Managing your school emails well helps you stay organised, meet deadlines, and communicate professionally.

## Staying Organised

- Create folders by subject to keep your inbox tidy and make emails easier to find.
- Pin important emails so they stay at the top of your inbox or folder.
- Flag emails that need action and unflag them once completed. You can filter your inbox to show only flagged emails.
- Use the search bar to quickly find emails from specific teachers or platforms (e.g. search "Sparx" or a teacher's name).
- Delete emails you don't need to avoid clutter and confusion.
- Check your inbox daily - make it part of your routine, such as reviewing emails before starting prep or once you get home from school.

## Writing Emails

- Be polite and use professional tone - these skills matter for university and work - use a greeting, full sentences, and a clear sign-off.
- Use the subject line wisely - make it clear what your email is about.
- CC anyone who needs to see the message - for example, your Form Tutor or another teacher.
- Proofread before sending - check for spelling, tone, and clarity.

## Extra Tips

- Check Teams and emails daily for updates on coursework and assessments.
- Reply promptly to emails that need a response - don't leave them sitting unread.
- Keep your email signature simple and appropriate if you use one.
- Don't use emojis or slang in formal emails to teachers or staff.
- If you're unsure how to phrase something, ask a parent, tutor, or teacher for help.



Email  
Etiquette  
Example:

Dear Miss James,

I hope this email finds you well.

Unfortunately, I missed your lesson yesterday as I was unwell.

I have copied the notes from a friend, but I was a little confused how to solve equations which are quadratic in sin / cos / tan.

I was wondering whether there was anything you could suggest that might help.

With many thanks for your time and best wishes,

Cora

# TIME MANAGEMENT

## Creating A Study Schedule

We all lead busy lives, and it's easy to procrastinate - especially when there's always something more fun to do than prep! One of the best ways to stay on top of your studies is to create a **realistic study schedule** that works for you.

Your Form Tutors will help you create one at the start of each academic year, so you'll have a solid foundation to build on.

## Study Schedule Tips

### 1. Start with the Fun Stuff

Don't begin by filling your schedule with study blocks - that's a common mistake. Instead, list the activities you enjoy and don't want to compromise on (e.g. sports, hobbies, social time, TV, reading). Estimate when you usually do these things and block them into your schedule first. This helps you build a routine that feels balanced and achievable.

### 2. Fit Study into the Gaps

Once your leisure and co-curricular activities are in place, look at the remaining gaps in your week. These are your study slots. You don't need to assign specific tasks to each slot - you could just mark them as "study time." If there aren't any gaps left, consider whether you need to reduce or reschedule some activities.

### 3. Use Your Schedule as a Guide, Not a Rulebook

Your study schedule should support you, not stress you out. Aim to stick to it around 60% of the time - that's a win! If you're tired or need a break, that's okay. Equally, if you feel ready to study outside your scheduled time, go for it. Flexibility is key.

### 4. Focus on Tasks, Not Time

Instead of saying "*I'll study for 30 minutes,*" try "*I'll complete this worksheet*" or "*I'll revise this topic.*" Task-based goals help you stay focused and give you a clear sense of achievement.

## Extra Tips for Success!

- **Use a schedule** to map out your week visually - **colour-code** activities to make them easy to follow.
- **Review your schedule each Sunday** to adjust for the week ahead.
- **Build in short breaks** during longer study sessions to stay fresh.

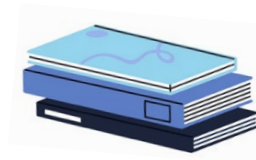
Here is an example of a KS4 Study Schedule:

🕒	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7-8		Commute		Commute			
	Commute	Netball	Commute	Ballet	Commute		
8-9	<b>SCHOOL DAY</b>						
9-10						Art Club	Extra Maths
10-11							Private Study
11-12							
12-1							
1-2						Lunch	Lunch
2-3							
3-4							
4-5	Commute					Hang out with friends	Family Time
	Relax & Snack	Relax & Snack	Swimming	Relax & Snack	Drama Club		
5-6	Emails & Organising	Emails & Organising		Relax & Snack	Emails & Organising	Relax & Snack	
	Maths Prep	History Prep	Geography Prep				
6-7	Biology Prep	TP Prep	English Prep	Physics Prep	Maths Prep		
	Music Prep	Chemistry Prep	Latin Prep	Art Prep	French Prep		Prepare Week Ahead
7-8	Supper	Supper	Supper	Supper	Supper	Supper	Supper
	Music Practice	Music Practice	French Prep	Music Practice	English Prep	Netflix	
8-9							
	9-10						

Here is an example of a KS5 Study Schedule:

🕒	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday		Saturday	Sunday		
Before School		Netball Training		Netball Training	Run Club					
Reg: 8:20										
P0: 8:25			Wellbeing							
P1: 8:55	Maths	Biology		Private Study	Maths		Netball Fixture	Private Study		
P2: 9:30			Maths	Biology	Biology					
P3: 10:10	Private Study	Private Study								
BREAK										
P4: 11:05			Music Lesson	Biology	Biology					
P5: 11:45	Biology	Maths	Private Study	EPQ	Westmacott Programme					
P6: 12:20			Chemistry							
LUNCH									Lunch	Lunch
Clubs: 1:30	Maths Clinic	Senior Strings	Biology Clinic	Chemistry Clinic	Orchestra					
Reg: 2:05									Hang out with friends / relax	
P7: 2:15	Biology		Chemistry	Private Study	Chemistry					
P8: 2:50		Chemistry		Speaker Programme	Private Study					
P9: 3:25	Chemistry		PE							
4-5	Emails	Emails		Emails						
5-6	Private Study	Private Study	Volunteer-ing	Private Study	Rowing Club					
6-7			Private Study							
7-8	Supper	Supper	Supper	Supper	Supper					
	Music Practice	Music Practice	Private Study	Music Practice						
8-9										
9-10										
								Prepare week ahead		
								Supper		

# MAKING EFFECTIVE USE OF PRIVATE STUDY PERIODS



Private study periods are an opportunity to take control of your learning. Used well, they help you stay organised, reduce workload in the evenings, and build independence - essential skills for GCSEs, A Levels, university, and beyond. These sessions are most effective when you use them with purpose and structure.

## Why Private Study Matters

- They give you protected time to complete prep or revision.
- They help you stay on top of content-heavy subjects.
- They allow you to revisit tricky topics while they're still fresh.
- They help you develop independent learning skills essential for Sixth Form success.

## Before Your Study Period

- Know your goals
- Check your planner or Teams so you know what needs doing.
- Bring the right equipment: textbooks, notes, worksheets, laptop/charger, headphones (if allowed), stationery.
- Have a plan: decide whether you're completing prep, revising a topic, or working on long-term coursework.
- Turn off distractions: phone away, notifications off, and avoid chatting.

## During Your Study Period: Work with Purpose

### 1. Start with a quick plan (1-2 minutes)

- Ask yourself: What do I want to complete by the end of this period?

- What does "finished" look like?
- Do I need to prioritise something with an upcoming deadline?

### 2. Choose one focused task at a time

- Avoid multitasking - it reduces efficiency.
- Examples of effective tasks
- Completing a specific piece of prep
- Reviewing class notes and rewriting key ideas
- Making flashcards or a mind map for a topic
- Completing practice questions
- Reading around a topic or starting research
- Reviewing feedback and improving a piece of work

### 3. Use time-management techniques

- Pomodoro: 20-25 minutes work, 5-minute break
- Task chunking: break big tasks into smaller steps
- "Finish this first": choose one task and complete it fully before starting another

### 4. Work actively, not passively

- Avoid just re-reading notes.
- Instead: Summarise in your own words
- Create diagrams, timelines, or flow charts
- Self-test using questions or flashcards
- Teach the idea to an imaginary student

## After Your Study Period: Check and Review

- Tick off what you achieved - progress builds momentum.
- Note any questions or gaps to ask your teacher about next lesson.
- Update your planner so you know what remains for later.
- If you didn't finish something, carry it forward clearly.

## Top Tips for Making Study Periods Count

- Sit in a quiet area away from friends so you can concentrate.
- Use headphones only for revision videos or textbooks online - not music with lyrics.
- Avoid perfectionism
- Mix tasks if you have multiple study periods in a week (prep, revision, long-term projects).
- Keep everything organised in OneNote, Teams, and your folders so work is easy to find.
- Ask for help early- don't let confusion build.
- Stay consistent - good habits make your workload lighter every week.

# LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

It's completely normal to feel nervous or stressed about school work from time to time - you are not alone. A little stress can help you stay focused, but too much can affect your health and make studying harder. **The key is learning how to manage it.**

## Recognising Stress



Look out for signs that stress might be building up:

- **Loss of appetite**
- **Sudden weight changes**
- **Feeling anxious or overwhelmed**
- **Difficulty concentrating**
- **Feeling emotional**
- **Trouble sleeping**

**If you notice these signs, it's important to take action early.**

## Mental Health Matters



Here are some ways to protect your wellbeing while studying:

- **Set realistic goals** - break tasks into small, manageable chunks.
- **Celebrate small wins** - write down one thing each day you're proud of.
- **Take regular breaks** - short pauses help your brain reset.
- **Leave time to relax in the evening** - avoid working too late.
- **Avoid burnout** - take one full day off each week.
- **Use distractions as rewards** - e.g. reply to a message from a friend after finishing prep.
- **Don't compare yourself to others** - focus on your own progress.
- **Adjust your schedule if needed** - it should work for you, not against you.
- **Use focus Apps** - block social media to avoid distractions and reduce stress. e.g. Forest app.
- **Remember: it's okay not to stick to your schedule 100% of the time.**



## Take A Break from Technology

Too much screen time can affect your sleep, mood, and concentration. Try these tips:

- **Turn off screens during breaks** - avoid scrolling or watching TV.
- **Eat meals away from your study space and devices.**
- **Get outside daily for fresh air and a change of scenery.**
- **Stretch regularly to avoid sore muscles from sitting too long.**



## Exercise Helps Reduce Stress

Exercise boosts your mood, energy, and focus. It also helps break up your day and gives structure to your routine.

- **It lowers stress hormones and increases feel-good chemicals (endorphins).**
- **It can take your mind off worries and help you feel more positive.**
- **It's a great way to socialise** - go for a walk or play a sport with a friend.
- **Choose something you enjoy so you'll stick with it.**



## Exercise Ideas

- **Go outside** - walk, run, or cycle in your local area.
- **Do an indoor workout** - try dance, HIIT, or follow a YouTube routine.
- **Try Yoga or Pilates** - great for stretching, relaxing, and improving focus.
- **Pick what suits you** - exercise should feel good, not stressful.



## Mindfulness: Stay Present

Mindfulness helps you feel calm, focused, and in control.

- **Focus on the present** - notice small things like sounds or smells.
- **Try breathing exercises** - deep breaths help clear your mind.
- **Use mindfulness apps or videos** - even 5 minutes can make a difference. e.g. Headspace App.



## Other Ways to Relax

- **Listen to music or a podcast unrelated to school.**
- **Spend time on hobbies** - reading, drawing, baking, or playing an instrument.
- **Try something new** - learning a skill can boost confidence.
- **Write a diary** - it's a great way to reflect and unwind.



## Talk to Someone

If you're feeling overwhelmed, talking helps. You are not alone.

- **Visit Cornerstone** - Speak to someone you trust - a parent, teacher, tutor, or GP.
- **Call or message a friend** - they might be feeling the same.
- **If you'd rather talk to someone confidentially, try:**

### **ContemPlace (our school's counselling service)**

[counselling@fhs-sw1.org.uk](mailto:counselling@fhs-sw1.org.uk)

### **Childline (emotional support and advice)**

Call 0800 1111

### **Mind (mental health support)**

Call 0300 123 3393

### **Shout (support for anyone in crisis)**

Text 'SHOUT' to 85258

- **Bottling up stress doesn't help** - sharing how you feel is a strength.



## Sleep and Diet Matter

Getting enough rest and eating well helps your brain work at its best.

- **Don't skip sleep to study** - sleep helps you process what you've learned.
- **Do something relaxing before bed** - avoid screens, caffeine, and intense exercise.
- **Keep your phone away from your bed** - it can disrupt your sleep.
- **Eat plenty of fruit and veg** - yes, even broccoli!
- **Don't skip meals** - it's harder to concentrate when you're hungry.
- **Drink lots of water** - keep a bottle on your desk.
- **Grab a healthy snack when needed** - it helps keep your energy up.

# MOTIVATION AND PROCRASTINATION

## Staying Motivated

- Link motivation to long-term goals like university, apprenticeships, or career plans.
- Use SMART targets for coursework and revision milestones.
- Try to stay positive, even when the work feels tough. Every bit helps build your understanding.
- Focus on your own goals. Everyone's path is different, so avoid comparing yourself to others.
- Progress matters more than perfection - learning is about improving step by step.
- Use positive self-talk. Swap *"I can't do this"* for *"I'll give it a go"* or *"I'm still learning."*
- Link your learning to real life - maths in sports stats, science in cooking, or English in your favourite films.

## Motivation Boosters

- Set small goals and reward yourself - a snack, a walk, playing with your dog, or watching a bit of TV.
- Keep your long-term goals visible. A photo, quote, or reminder in your planner can help.
- Plan something fun for after big assignments or assessments - it gives you something to look forward to.
- Use a planner or checklist to track your progress. Seeing what you've achieved can be a great motivator.
- Mix things up - change your study location or method to keep things fresh and engaging.



## Beating Procrastination

- Procrastination is when you delay tasks that need doing - and it eats up valuable time.
- Cut out distractions: turn off your phone, TV, or anything that pulls your focus.
- Take regular breaks to stay fresh and focused.
- Tackle one piece of prep at a time - don't try to do everything at once.
- Break big tasks into smaller chunks so they feel more manageable.
- Start with something simple to ease yourself into working mode.
- Use a timer technique like Pomodoro (25 minutes work, 5 minutes break) to stay focused.
- Make a *"done"* list - seeing what you've completed can be just as motivating as a to-do list.

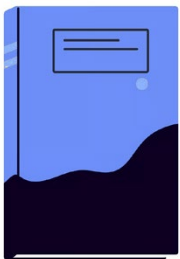
## SMART Targets

Setting SMART targets can help you stay focused and track your progress. They break big goals into clear, manageable steps - making it easier to stay on track and feel a sense of achievement.

What does SMART stand for?



- S** **Specific:** Be clear about what you want to achieve. Vague goals like “*do better in maths*” are hard to follow. Try “*complete all my maths homework on time this week*” instead.
- M** **Measurable:** You should be able to tell when you’ve achieved your goal. Ask yourself: *How will I know I’ve done it?*
- A** **Attainable:** Make sure your goal is realistic. Aiming too high can be discouraging- set yourself up for success!
- R** **Relevant:** Your goal should matter to you and help you move forward in your learning or personal growth.
- T** **Time-related:** Set a deadline. Having a time frame helps you stay focused and motivated.



Example SMART Target:

*“To improve my understanding/skills in [subject/area], I will [specific action] [how often] until [deadline]. I will use [support/resources] to help me, and I will measure my progress by [what you will check/look for].”*

---

# DYNAMIC READING

Dynamic Reading helps you focus on the most important parts of a text. It's about reading with a purpose and finding key information quickly. Instead of reading every word slowly, you learn to identify what matters most.

## Dynamic Reading...

- Saves you time when studying.
- Helps you understand the main ideas faster.
- Improves your ability to remember key facts.



## Steps:

**Define your purpose** - Ask yourself: *Why am I reading this? What do I need to find out?*

**Scan the article** - Look at the title, headings, subheadings, and any diagrams or images. These give clues about the main ideas.

**Find the evidence** - Focus on the first sentence of each paragraph and look for facts, examples, or statistics that support the key points.

## Tips:

- **Don't get stuck on every word. Look for meaning.**
- **Highlight or underline key phrases.**
- **Ask questions as you read to stay engaged.**

# NOTE TAKING

## Cornell Note Making Method

The *Cornell Note Making Method* is used around the world to help students summarise information clearly and revise more effectively. It's simple, structured, and helps you focus on what matters most.

### How to Set Up Your Page:

TITLE (write subject and topic here)	
Date: xxxx	Teacher: xxxxxxxx
<b>Revision Questions</b> What questions are answered in this topic?  What might be asked in an exam?	<b>Notes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keep it simpler - no full sentences.</li><li>• Use key terms and abbreviations.</li><li>• Leave out pronouns [he/she/it] and use symbols, (e.g. → for 'led to', &amp; for 'and')</li><li>• Include visuals like diagrams, charts and timelines.</li></ul>
<b>Summary</b> Write a short summary of the key ideas in your own words. This helps reinforce your understanding and makes revision easier.	

### Other Note-Taking Tips

- **Colour-code your notes**

Use different colours for keywords, quotes, explanations, and actions.

- **Use abbreviations to save time:**

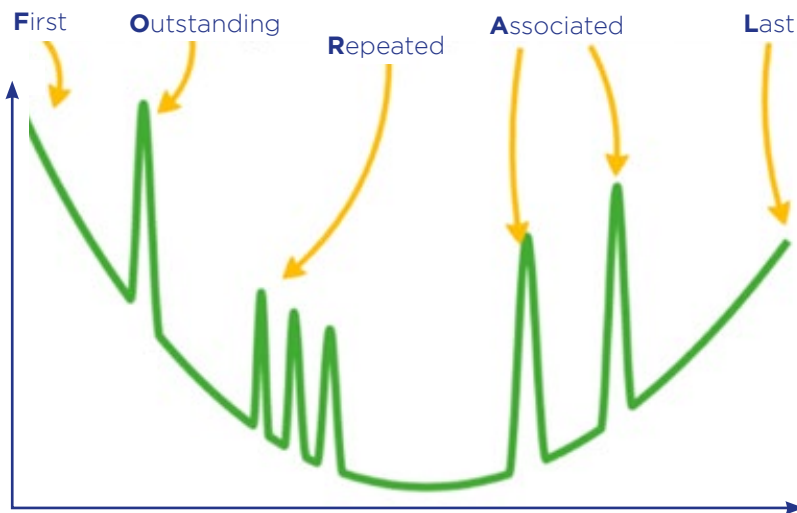
- **First few letters:** imp for "important"
- **Initials:** LG for "local government"
- **Remove vowels:** cn y rd ths?
- **Common abbreviations:** e.g. (for example), i.e. (in other words), v. (very), C (century)
- **Text-style:** B4 (before), AKA (also known as), BC (because), GR8 (great), IMO (in my opinion), POV (point of view)



# SPACED LEARNING

Here's the theory behind our revision tips - feel free to take a look if you're interested!

## FLORA and the Recall Curve



**FLORA** is a memory technique that helps you remember information by creating mental “hooks.” It’s based on how your brain naturally remembers things - especially what stands out, what’s repeated, and what’s placed at the beginning or end.

## What You’re Likely to Remember

If asked to remember a list of random words, e.g. *juniper, music, diamond, pigeon, turnip, netball, pencil, match, wee-wee, eagle, pen, so, necklace, eye, carrot, cup, sparrow, leaf, turnip, cat*, you’re more likely to recall:

- The **first and last** items
- Words that are **linked** (e.g. netball and match)
- Words that are **repeated** (e.g. turnip)
- Words that are **unusual or funny** (e.g. wee-wee)

This is how FLORA works - it helps you use these patterns to make your revision **more memorable**.

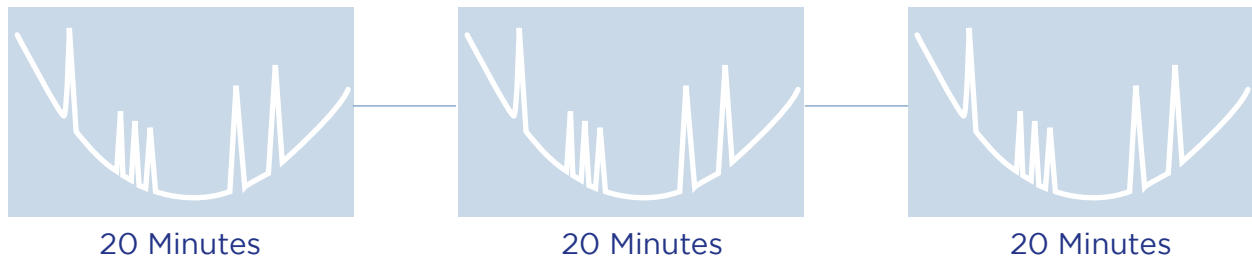
## Using FLORA to Revise

- **F**irst and **L**ast → Put the most important information at the beginning and end of your notes or flashcards.
- **O**utstanding → Make key facts stand out using colour, images, mnemonics, or placing them in unusual places (e.g. post-it notes on your mirror).
- **R**epeat → Go over important facts multiple times to strengthen memory.
- **A**ssociation → Link ideas together so one fact leads you to the next.

## Spacing Your Learning

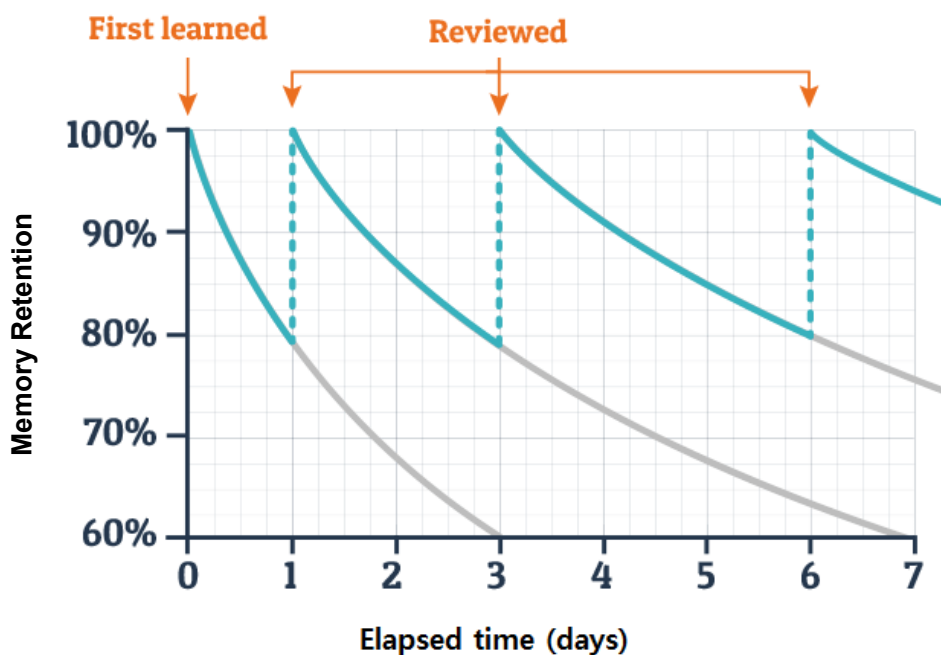
### During a 1 Hour revision session

Spacing out your revision helps you remember more over time. Three short sessions (e.g. 3 × 20 minutes) are **more effective** than one long hour of cramming.



## The Ebbinghaus Forgetting Curve

### Typical Forgetting Curve for Newly Learned Information



This curve shows how quickly we forget information if we don't review it!

- Reviewing material **3–4 times over a week** can boost recall to **85% or more**.
- Cramming might help short-term memory, but spaced learning helps long-term retention - especially useful for end-of-year or public exams.

# ASSESSMENTS



Assessments are designed to help you learn, grow, and develop, not to define your ability. Mistakes aren't failures - they're valuable clues that show us where to focus next.

What matters most is how you respond to feedback and the steps you take afterwards. Your score is just one part of the picture; your effort, reflection, and progress are what truly count.

REMEMBER:

- **Learning is a journey, not a race.**
- **Improvement over time is more important than perfection.**
- **Asking for help is a strength, not a weakness.**

And if you're ever unsure about what to do next, your teachers are here to guide and support you every step of the way.

# REVISION TOP TIPS

## The 3-Step Revision Technique

This method can improve recall by **up to 300%**:

### 1. REVIEW

Do a quick read-through of the topic.

Time: 20 minutes

### 2. TRANSFORM

Turn the information into a mind map, diagram, summary notes, or essay.

Time: 20 minutes

### 3. TEST

Quiz yourself or answer exam-style questions.

Time: 20 minutes



## Revise Smart

How you revise matters just as much as how long you revise. Here's a rough guide to how much you might retain using different techniques:

10% of what you read

20% of what you hear

30% of what you see

50% of what you see and hear

70% of what you say and write

90% of what you do or teach

## Make Your Revision Active

- Don't just read - **highlight, annotate,** and **summarise** in your own words.
- Teach someone else - explaining a topic boosts recall and helps you spot gaps in your understanding.
- Use flashcards, quizzes, and diagrams to make learning interactive.

# Revision Tips Based On How The Brain Works



## 1. Stay Motivated

- Build in small rewards at the end of each revision session.
  - Add a visual reminder of your goal - a car, an A-grade certificate, or a beach photo - to your planner, locker, or bedroom wall.
- 

## 2. Revise in Three Stages (20 Minutes Each)

- Review the topic.
  - Transform it into a mind map, diagram, or concise notes.
  - Test yourself on what you've learned.
- 

## 3. Use Mind Maps

- Mind maps can double your recall, especially when you use colour and images.
  - Pin them up on your walls - every glance reinforces memory.
- 

## 4. Beat the Forgetting Curve

- Without review, up to 60% of what you revise may be lost after just two days.
  - Review briefly after one day, one week, and one month to keep knowledge fresh.
- 

## 5. Choose the Right Revision Space

- Avoid revising in your bedroom - your brain associates it with sleep.
  - Aim for a quiet, distraction-free space that mimics exam conditions.
- 

## 6. Know What You Need to Know

- Print out your exam specifications or schemes of work.
  - Tick off topics as you revise them.
- 

## 7. Create a Weekly Revision Timetable

- Start by blocking out times you can't revise, then fill in the rest.
- Be realistic and flexible.

## 8. Break Information into Chunks

- Avoid revising from long paragraphs.
  - Use bullet points, diagrams, and headings to make content manageable.
- 

## 9. Keep Your Phone Away

- Even one glance can distract your brain for up to 10 minutes.
  - Put it in another room or use focus apps if needed. Eg. Forest
- 

## 10. Take Regular Short Breaks

- Short, frequent breaks help your brain reset and absorb information better.
- 

## 11. Avoid Music While Revising

- Especially music with lyrics - it competes for your brain's attention.
  - If needed, opt for instrumental or white noise.
- 

## 12. Use Past Papers and Mark Schemes

- Practise applying your knowledge in exam-style questions.
  - Use mark schemes to understand how answers are scored.
- 

## 13. Test Yourself Under Exam Conditions

- Time yourself and work without notes.
  - Focus on how to structure answers the way examiners expect.
- 

## 14. Use Acronyms and Mnemonics

- Create memory aids like *BIDMAS* or *Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain*.
  - Make them quirky - the more unusual, the more memorable.
- 

## 15. Start with Your Weakest Topics

- Tackle the hardest areas first to give yourself more time to improve.
- 

## 16. Teach What You've Learned

- Explaining topics to others (even pets!) boosts recall to around 80%.
- 

## 17. Rest and Reward

- Celebrate milestones with small treats - it keeps motivation high.

## 18. Revise with a Friend

- Test each other using flash cards or quick quizzes.
  - Speak for one minute on a topic, then ask each other questions.
  - Create funny stories or pictures to help facts stick.
- 

## 19. Say It Out Loud

- Speaking out loud helps you engage with the material and avoid skimming over details.
  - Record yourself reading key points and listen back.
  - Rewrite song lyrics to include revision content - and challenge your friends to do the same!
- 

## 20. Exercise Your Mind and Body

- Physical activity boosts brain function.
  - Try bouncing a ball while reciting facts or playing catch while reviewing topics.
- 

## 21. Identify Strengths and Weaknesses

- Focus on areas where you've lost marks or received feedback.
  - Ask teachers for insight.
  - Allocate more time to weaker topics in your timetable.
- 

## 22. Use Apps and Online Tools Wisely

- Try quiz apps, flash card tools, time trackers, and break reminders.
- But if they distract you more than help, ditch them.

### Final Tip:

**Try each technique at least once to discover what works best for you. Revision is personal - the key is to find strategies that help *your* brain learn most effectively.**



178

# MIND MAPPING



## What Is a Mind Map?

- A mind map is a **diagram** that shows how ideas link together.
- Each mind map focuses on **one topic** - written in the centre of the page.
- **Sub-topics and details** branch out from the centre.
- Use **short phrases or keywords** - not full sentences.
- Add **boxes, bubbles, or highlights** to make key points stand out.
- Use **colour and images** to make your mind map more engaging and easier to remember.

Mind maps are a powerful way to organise information visually. They help you understand topics more clearly, spot connections between ideas, and make revision more memorable.

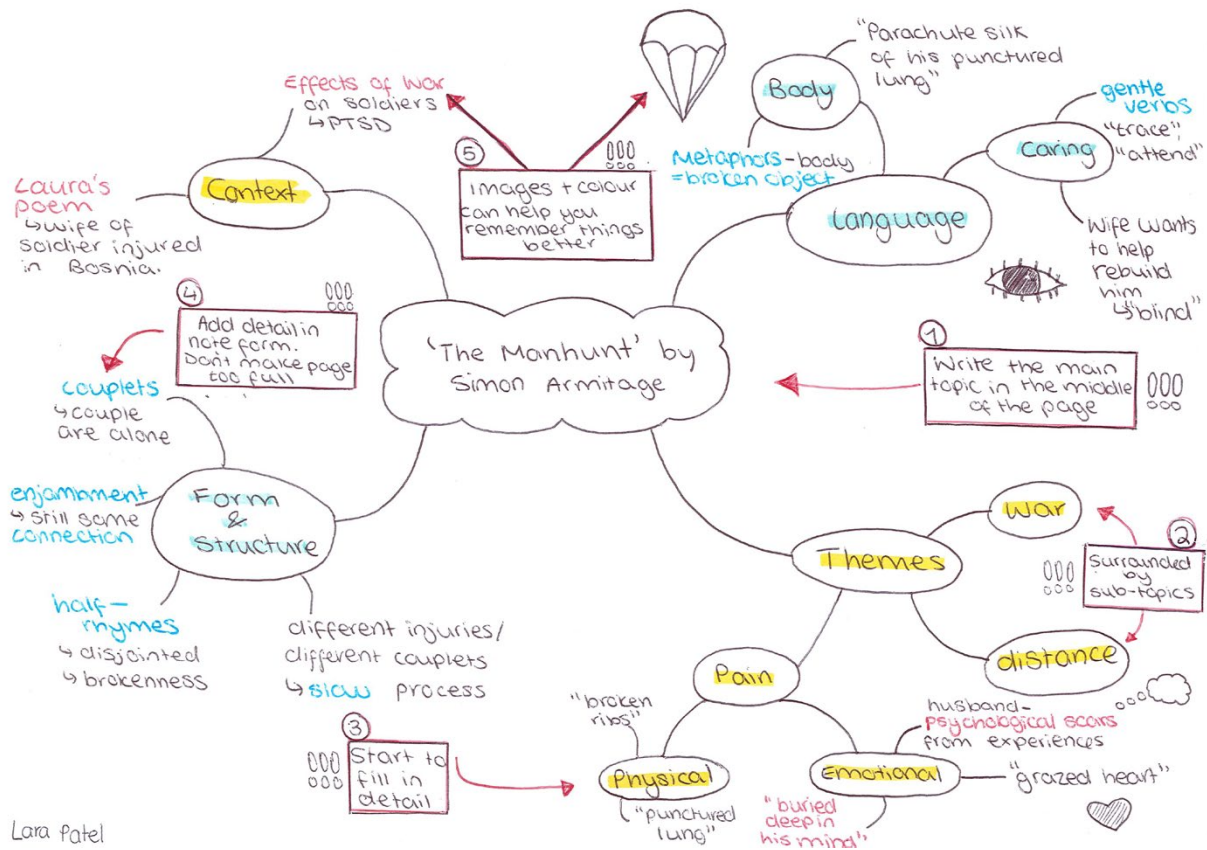
## Why Mind Maps Work for Revision

- They help you **visualise** information, which boosts memory and recall.
- Colour and images make facts **stick in your mind**.
- They help you **see links** between ideas, which is great for subjects like History, English, or Science.
- Mind maps encourage **active learning** - better than just reading notes.

## When to Use Mind Maps

- At **the start of revision** - summarise a topic using your notes and resources.
- **During revision** - pin them up in your study space so you see them often.
- To **test yourself** - draw a mind map from memory, then check and fill in gaps using a different colour.

Here is an example of a mind map for the poem 'The Manhunt' by Simon Armitage, created by Lara in Year 11. It isn't complete, but it gives you an idea of where to start.



## Mind Mapping Tips for Success

- Use **trigger words** - short, memorable phrases instead of full sentences.
- Include **images or symbols** - they're easier to remember than words.
- Use **colour coding** - e.g. one colour for definitions, another for examples.
- Keep it **clear and uncluttered** - too much detail can be overwhelming.
- Try digital tools like **MindMeister, Coggle, or Canva** if you prefer working online.

# FLOW CHARTS



## What Is a Flow Chart?

- A flow chart is a **diagram** that shows a process from beginning to end.
- It uses **boxes, arrows, and symbols** to show how each step leads to the next.
- You can include **words and images** to explain each stage clearly.
- Flow charts don't need to be fancy - they just need to be **clear and easy to follow**.

Flow charts are a great way to break down complex topics into clear, step-by-step processes. They help you visualise how things happen in order and are especially useful for subjects that involve sequences or systems.

## How to Create a Flow Chart

- **Start at the beginning** - write the first step at the top or centre and work downwards or outwards.
- Use **arrows** to show the direction of the process.
- Keep each step **short and concise** - just enough to jog your memory.
- Add **key points** or reminders next to each step if needed.
- Use **colour or shapes** to highlight important stages or decisions.

## When to Use Flow Charts

- Flow charts are perfect for subjects that involve processes, timelines, or cause-and-effect relationships. Here are some examples:

### History

Events leading to a major event (e.g. the Great Depression)

### Chemistry

Steps in a practical experiment or chemical reaction

### Geography

Stages of erosion or the water cycle

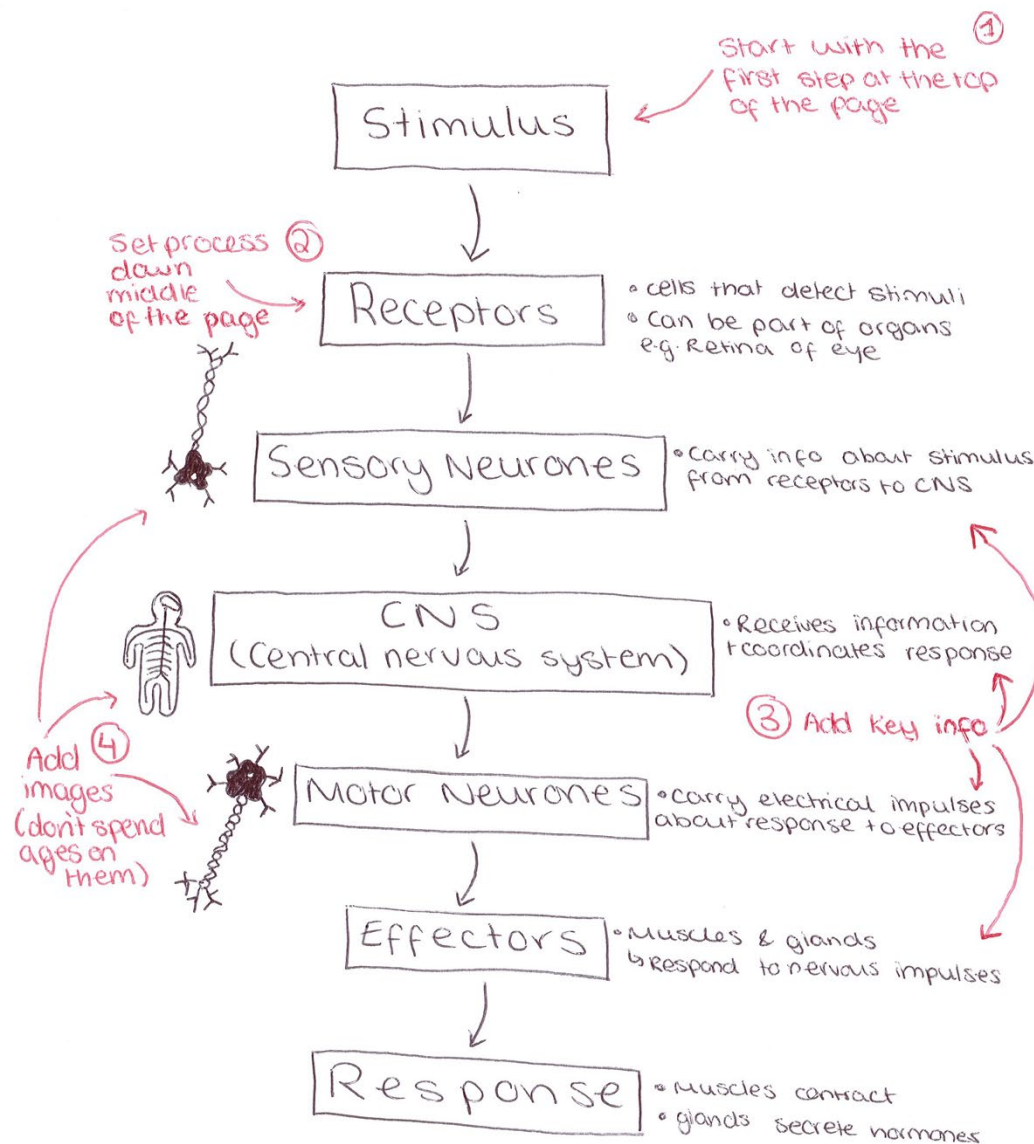
### Biology

How food moves through the digestive system

### Computer Science

Algorithms or coding logic

This is an example of a flow chart for Biology, illustrating how the Central Nervous System responds to stimuli. It was created by Lara in Year 11. While it doesn't cover the entire topic, it provides a helpful starting point.



## Flow Chart Tips for Success

- Use **symbols consistently** - e.g. rectangles for steps, diamonds for decisions.
- Keep your layout **logical and easy to follow** - avoid clutter.
- Use **colour coding** to group related steps or highlight key ideas.
- Try **creating flow charts from memory** to test your understanding.
- Pin them up in your study space - regular exposure **helps reinforce** learning.

# FLASH CARDS



## What Are Flash Cards?

- Flash cards are **small cards** with a question or prompt on one side, and the answer or explanation on the other.
- You can use them to **test yourself, summarise topics, or condense key information**. They're especially useful for:
  - Important dates in History
  - Language vocabulary
  - Key terms and definitions
  - Formulae and rules
  - Labelled diagrams
- Flash cards are **less useful for complex processes** or extended explanations - use flow charts or mind maps for those.

Flash cards are one of the simplest - and most effective - revision tools. They help you test your knowledge, identify gaps, and reinforce key facts in a quick and portable way.

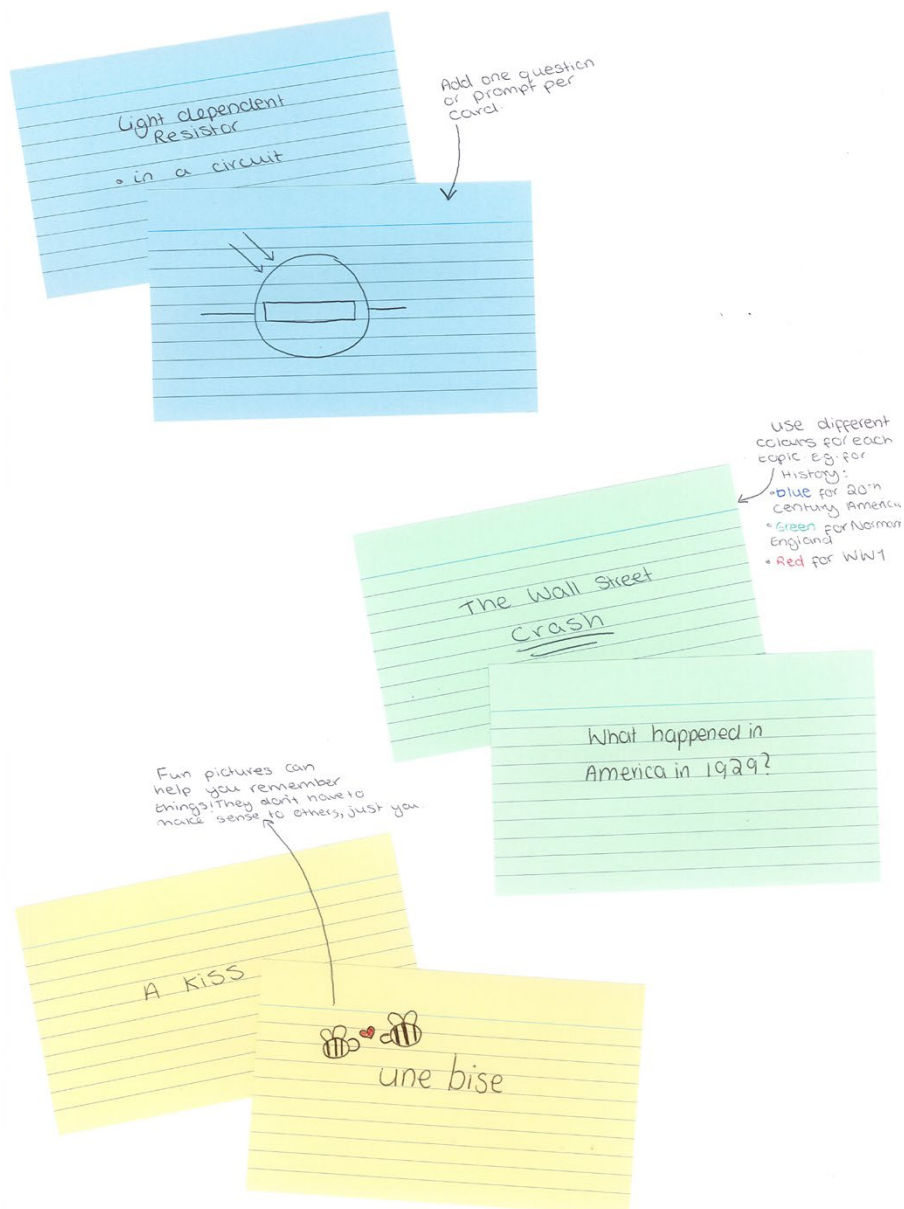
## Why Make Your Own?

- Creating your own flash cards helps you **actively engage** with the material.
- Picking out key information from your notes is part of the revision process.
- You can personalise them with **colour, images, or mnemonics** to make them more memorable.

## Smart Ways to Use Flash Cards

- **Say your answers out loud** - this helps reinforce memory and ensures you're not just skimming.
- **Test both directions** - e.g. English to French and French to English.
- **Group cards by confidence level** - test yourself more often on the ones you struggle with.
- **Use the *Leitner Method*** - move cards to different boxes based on how well you know them. Review harder ones more frequently. (Full details of this are on p36.)
- **Ask someone else to test you** - it removes the temptation to peek at the answer.
- **Use example questions** - write a question on one side and the answer on the other to simulate exam-style practice.

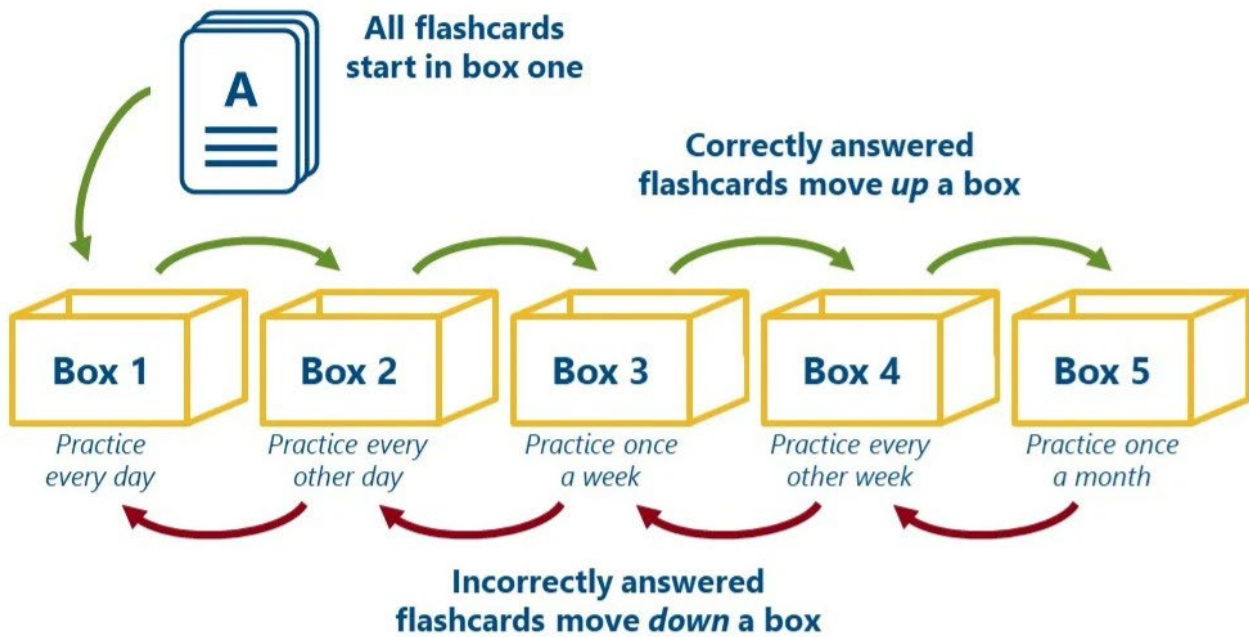
Here are a few examples of flashcards created by Lara in Year 11 (showing both front and back). They are designed to be clear and easy to read.



## Extra Tips for Success

- Keep your flash cards **short and focused** - one idea per card.
- Use **trigger words, symbols, or abbreviations** to save space.
- Add **visuals** where possible - diagrams and icons help with recall.
- Carry them with you - **revise on the bus, in a queue, or during short breaks.**
- Try digital flash card apps like **Quizlet, Anki, or Brainscape** if you prefer studying on your device.

# Flash Cards: The Leitner Method



## How It Works

- Sort your flash cards into **different boxes or piles** based on how well you know each one.
- Cards you answer correctly move to the next box (reviewed *less often*).
- Cards you struggle with stay in the first box (reviewed *more frequently*).
- This system uses **spaced learning**, which is proven to be more effective than cramming.

## Why It Works

- You spend more time on the **tricky stuff** and less time on what you've already mastered.
- It helps you **track your progress** and build confidence.
- It encourages **active recall** - testing your memory rather than just re-reading.
- It's a great way to **prepare for assessments** over time, not just the night before.

## Using the Leitner Method Effectively

Start early - you're usually given at least a week's notice before an assessment, so use that time wisely.

### Set up three boxes or piles:

BOX 1: Cards you **don't know** well - review daily

BOX 2: Cards you're **improving** on - review every 2–3 days

BOX 3: Cards you **know well** - review once a week

- Move cards between boxes based on how well you answer them.
- Keep your flash cards **short and focused** - one idea per card.
- Use **colour coding** or symbols to help you remember key points.
- Combine this method with other techniques like **mind maps, quizzes, or teaching someone else.**

### Extra Tips for Success

- **Say your answers out loud**  
- it helps reinforce memory.
- **Test both directions**  
- e.g. question to answer and answer to question.
- **Use a timer**  
- short, focused sessions are more effective than long ones.
- **Review regularly**  
- spaced repetition helps move information into long-term memory.
- **Track your progress**  
- seeing improvement boosts motivation.

# MEMORY TECHNIQUES

## Memory Techniques

Everyone learns differently - the key is to find memory techniques that work for you. Active learning strategies are far more effective than passive ones. They help move information from your short-term memory into your long-term memory, so it's there when you need it most - like in an exam.

## Active Learning Beats Passive Learning

Passive techniques (e.g. re-reading notes) don't help much with recall. Active techniques - like flash cards, blurting, and chunking - force your brain to retrieve information, which strengthens memory.

## Try These Memory Techniques:

### 1. Blurting

**Blurting helps you see what you do and don't know.**

- Read a text or watch a video on a topic.
- Write down everything you remember using one colour.
- Check your notes and add missing information in a different colour.
- This shows you what to revise and helps track progress.

### 2. Chunking

**Chunking breaks large amounts of information into smaller, manageable groups.**

- Group related items (e.g. characters by family, vocab by topic).
- Look for patterns in numbers or dates to reduce what you need to remember.

Examples:

#### THE FIRST WORLD WAR

> Prince Franz Ferdinand is assassinated and war is declared – 1914

> The Battle of the Somme – 1916

> The signing of the Armistice – 1918

Number patterns here could help reduce the number of digits you need to remember from 12 to just 5.

$$1914 + 2 = 1916$$

$$1916 + 2 = 1918$$

#### THE SECOND WORLD WAR

> 1939-1945

$$1939 = 3^0 3^2 3^1 3^2$$

The end of the war was in the same century.

$$1939-1945 \quad 1 + 3 = 4$$

$$1939-1945 \quad 9 - 4 = 5$$

### 3. Mnemonics

**Mnemonics use the first letters of words to help you remember sequences.**

#### **Light Waves:**

Radio, Microwaves, Infrared, Visible, Ultraviolet, X-rays, Gamma

e.g. → *Raccoons May Injure Very Unfortunate EX-Golfers*

#### **Taxonomy of Living Things:**

Domain, Kingdom, Phylum, Class, Order, Family, Genus, Species

e.g. → *Do Keep Ponds Clean Or Frogs Get Sick*

#### **Roman Numerals:**

I, V, X, L, C, D, M

e.g. → *I Value Xylophones Like Cows Dig Milk*

### 4. Storytelling

**Turn facts into quirky stories to make them stick.**

Example:

Oceanic and continental plates meet at destructive margins. The denser oceanic plate is forced into the mantle.

e.g. → *'Oceanic and Continental were wrestling brothers. One day, Continental shoved Oceanic into the mantle piece!'*

The more unusual the story, the more memorable it becomes!

## Top Tips for Memory Success

- **Repeat techniques regularly** - memory improves with practice.
- **Use colour, visuals, and movement** to engage your brain.
- **Teach someone else** - explaining boosts recall.
- **Mix techniques** - use flash cards, blurting, and mnemonics together.
- **Make it fun!** - the more you enjoy it, the more likely it is to stick.

# TEST YOURSELF



## Start Small

- Practise with just one long-answer question before attempting a full paper.
  - This helps you get used to structuring detailed responses without time pressure.
- 



## Swap and Share

- Exchange answers with a classmate to give and receive feedback.
  - Seeing how others approach questions can help you improve your own technique.
- 



## Plan Before You Write

- Try planning answers to a range of questions without writing them out fully.
  - This builds your ability to structure responses quickly and identify key points.
- 



## Target Your Weak Spots

- Focus on topics or question types you find most difficult.
  - Practising these will boost your confidence and help you feel more prepared.
- 



## Use Past Papers to Check Progress

- When you feel ready, complete a full past paper under timed conditions to simulate exams.
  - Work without notes to see what you've retained and what needs more revision.
- 



## Mark with a Mark Scheme

- Review answers with mark schemes and examiner reports for improvement.
- Use the mark scheme to check how marks are awarded.
- Review where you gained or missed marks - even partial answers can score.
- Go over incorrect answers to learn how to improve next time.
- Look for exam command words and key phrases in mark schemes.



## Review and Repeat

- Identify topics you struggled with in the paper.
- Revise them, then try the same paper again after a day or two.
- Keep testing yourself until the information sticks.



## Learn from Examiner Reports

- Read examiner reports to see what strong answers included.
- Spot common mistakes and avoid them in your own work.
- Highlight key terms or ideas in your notes that examiners mention.



## Don't Panic if It's Tough at First

- It's normal to find practice papers challenging at the start.
- The more you practise, the more confident and familiar you'll become.
- Improvement takes time - keep going and track your progress.



## Stick With It

- Past papers are the best way to prepare for exams.
- They help you get used to the format, timing, and question styles.
- Every attempt builds your skills and confidence.

# EXAM TIPS

## Before The Exam

### Prep the Night Before

- Aim for at least 8 hours of sleep - it helps memory and decision-making.
- Eat a balanced dinner to fuel your brain.
- Pack your exam kit so you're not rushing in the morning.
- Double-check the time and location of your exam.
- Do something relaxing - light exercise or a calming activity.
- Review key notes or do a short test - but don't cram.
- Sleep deprivation affects focus, memory, and judgement - rest is essential.



---

### Exam Kit Essentials

- Pens, pencils, highlighters - bring extras.
- Rubber and sharpener.
- Clear pencil case.
- Clear water bottle (no label).
- Subject-specific tools - calculator, ruler, etc.

---

### Start the Day Right

- Wake up early enough to get ready calmly.
- Set an alarm - don't risk being late.
- Eat a protein-rich breakfast - it boosts concentration better than sugar or caffeine.
- If you have time, review key facts, formulas or quotes.
- Avoid learning anything new - save your energy for the exam.
- A short walk or light exercise before the exam can boost brain function and focus.

---

### Arrive Calm and Ready

- Leave with plenty of time to spare.
- Don't arrive too early - avoid a long, anxious wait.
- Stay calm if others seem stressed - focus on your own mindset.
- It's okay to ask for space if you need to mentally prepare.

## During The Exam

### Settle In

- Lay out your stationery and water bottle.
- Take deep breaths to steady yourself.
- Read and complete the front of your paper.
- Listen carefully to invigilator instructions.



### Stay Focused

- Skim through the whole paper first - decide where to start.
- Read each question twice - misreading is a common mistake.
- Answer only what's asked - don't go off-topic.
- Make educated guesses if unsure.
- Use the "mark a minute" rule to manage your time.
- Start with easier questions to build confidence and save time.
- Plan longer answers - jot down key points and structure.
- Don't get distracted by others - stay in your zone.
- Leave time to check your answers - especially for SPAG and calculations.

### Handle Exam Panics

- Stuck on a question? Move on and come back later.
- Running out of time? Prioritise short-answer questions.
- Made a mistake? Cross it out and rewrite clearly.
- Drink water - studies show it can improve performance by up to 10%.

## After The Exam

### Reflect and Reset

- Be proud - every exam is progress.
- Don't dwell on your answers - they're done.
- Think about what worked and what didn't.
- If you ran out of time, adjust your pacing next time.
- Use what you've learned to prepare smarter for the next exam.

### Recharge

- Take a break - exams are mentally draining.
- Do something fun or get active to lift your mood.
- If another exam is coming up, review notes briefly - but rest first.

### Celebrate Your Progress

- Store your notes - don't throw them away just yet.
- Treat yourself - dinner, a trip, time with friends.
- Enjoy your free time and try not to stress about results day.

# REVISION TIMETABLE

## How to Make a Revision Timetable

### 1. Know Your Exam Dates

- Write down the dates of all your exams.
  - Fill in an exam timetable and keep it somewhere visible.
  - Refer to it regularly to stay focused and plan ahead.
- 

### 2. Break Subjects into Topics

- Use a topic planner for each subject.
  - Check your exam board's specification or ask your teacher for a topic list.
  - Rate each topic using a simple system (e.g. 😊 😐 😞 ) to show your confidence level.
  - Update your ratings as you revise and grow more confident.
- 

### 3. Start Your Timetable

- Add all your exam dates to your revision timetable.
  - This gives you a clear overview of how much time you have to prepare.
- 

### 4. Divide Your Day into Sessions

- Think about when you work best- morning, afternoon, or evening.
  - Plan how many hours you'll revise each day and include regular breaks.
  - Use your school timetable as a guide.
  - A good rule: at least a 10-minute break every hour or 5-minute break every half hour.
- 

### 5. Add Your Commitments

- Include time for hobbies, exercise, family, and friends.
  - Don't overload yourself - balance is key.
  - Leave some gaps for flexibility in case plans change.
- 

### 6. Add Your Subjects

- Prioritise subjects based on difficulty, content volume, and exam order.
  - Work backwards from each exam date.
  - Include school-organised revision sessions.
  - Colour-code subjects to make your timetable clearer.
  - Use lesson times for revision where possible.
- 

### 7. Add Your Topics

- Use your topic planner to decide which topics to revise first.
- Include each topic more than once to reinforce learning.
- Use a pencil at first so you can adjust as needed.
- You can fill in topics weekly based on your progress.

## Space It Out and Mix It Up

### Space Out Your Revision

- Revisiting topics with gaps in between helps memory stick.
- Avoid cramming- spread revision across days and weeks.
- Plan to review each topic multiple times.



### Mix Up Your Subjects

- Revise a variety of subjects each day.
- Don't group all sciences or languages together.
- Break subjects into short, focused chunks.
- Mix up topics within the same subject when revising (interleaving).
- Mixing subjects keeps your brain engaged and improves retention.

### Check Your Timetable

Use This Checklist:

> **All exam dates included ?**

.....

> **Topics added for the first few weeks ?**

.....

> **Dates double-checked ?**

.....

> **A mix of subjects each day ?**

.....

> **Regular breaks planned ?**

.....

> **Time for hobbies and rest ?**

.....

> **Gaps left for flexibility ?**

### Stick to Your Timetable - But Stay Flexible

- **Use your timetable and topic planners to track progress.**
- **Adapt your plan if needed - swap topics based on confidence.**
- **If you miss a session, use your gaps to catch up.**
- **Stay calm and keep going - progress is the goal!**

# THE BRAIN SCIENCE AND THEORY BEHIND EFFECTIVE STUDY SKILLS



## Why these techniques work – and why we are taught them

You have been taught study techniques such as retrieval practice, spacing, interleaving and prioritising sleep. Sometimes these methods feel harder, slower, or less reassuring than simply re-reading notes. So why do teachers insist on them?

The answer lies in **how the brain actually learns**. Much of what we know about this comes from cognitive science and neuroscience, including research discussed by Barbara Oakley in *Learning How to Learn*.

This guide explains why **effective study skills work**, even when they don't always feel effective.

# 1. How the Brain Learns: Focused and Diffuse Thinking

Your brain uses **two different modes of thinking**:

## **FOCUSED MODE**

Used when you concentrate hard on a problem or piece of information. This mode is good for practising known material and following familiar steps.

## **DIFFUSE MODE**

Used when your mind relaxes (for example, during sleep, walking, or taking breaks). This mode helps the brain make new connections between ideas.

### **Why this matters:**

Learning requires both modes. Long, intense study without breaks traps the brain in focused mode. Breaks and sleep allow diffuse mode to strengthen understanding and link ideas together. This is why spacing and rest are built into effective study strategies.

# 2. Learning Is Physical: Building Neural Pathways

Learning is not just “understanding” - it involves **physical changes in the brain**.

Each time you learn something:

- Neurons form or strengthen connections
- These connections create **neural pathways**
- The more often a pathway is used, the faster and stronger it becomes

Barbara Oakley explains that:

*Feeling like you understand something is not the same as building a pathway for recall. This explains why some study methods feel productive but fail in exams.*

# 3. Why Re-Reading Feels Good but Often Fails

Re-reading notes:

- Makes information look familiar
- Creates a sense of fluency
- Triggers recognition, not recall

Recognition is weak. Exams do not ask whether something looks familiar - they ask whether you can **retrieve it from memory under pressure**.

This mismatch between how confident you feel and how well you can actually remember something is called an **illusion of learning**.

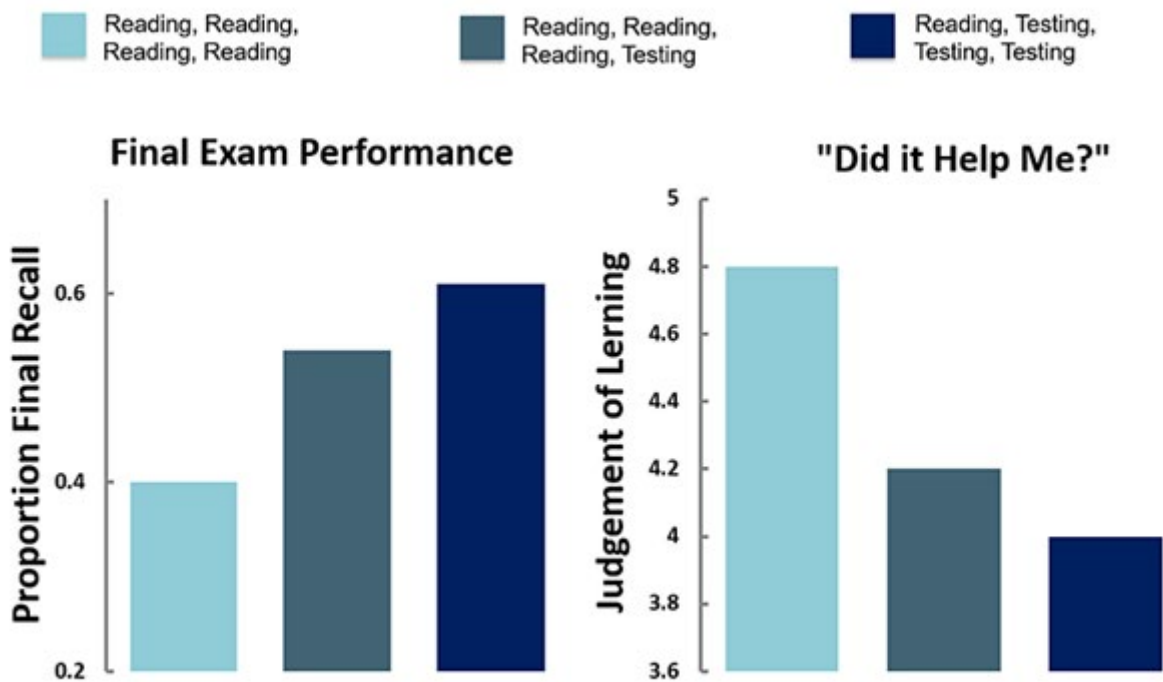
## 4. Why Testing Yourself Works (Even When It Feels Worse)

When you test yourself:

- Your brain must retrieve information
- Retrieval strengthens neural pathways
- Mistakes help identify gaps and improve memory once corrected

This effort feels uncomfortable, but it is exactly what makes learning stick. Oakley describes this as “**desirable difficulty**” - learning should feel effortful if it is working.

## 5. What the Roediger & Karpicke (2006) Study Shows



Source: Roediger and Karpicke (2006)

This diagram comes from a famous psychology study by *Roediger and Karpicke (2006)*, discussed in *Learning How to Learn*. It compares **how students studied, how well they actually learned, and how effective they thought their studying was.**

**The study compared three approaches:**

- Repeated re-reading
- Mostly reading with one test
- Reading once followed by repeated testing



### **Final exam performance (what actually worked):**

Students who tested themselves repeatedly remembered **the most** in a later exam.  
Students who only re-read remembered **the least**.

### **Judgement of learning (what felt effective):**

Students who re-read the most felt the **most confident**.  
Students who tested themselves felt **least confident**, even though they performed best.

### **This is the key insight:**

The study method that produced the strongest learning felt the worst, while the weakest method felt the best.

## 6. Why This Happens: The Brain Is Easy to Fool

Re-reading creates familiarity, and familiarity feels like knowing. Testing removes support and exposes gaps, which feels uncomfortable. But:

- **Familiarity  $\neq$  memory**
- **Confidence  $\neq$  exam readiness**
- **Discomfort  $\neq$  failure**

Testing works because it forces the brain to rebuild pathways, making them stronger each time.



## 7. Forgetting Is Part of Learning

Forgetting is not a sign that learning has failed. In fact:

- Slight forgetting followed by retrieval strengthens memory
- Spaced retrieval improves long-term retention

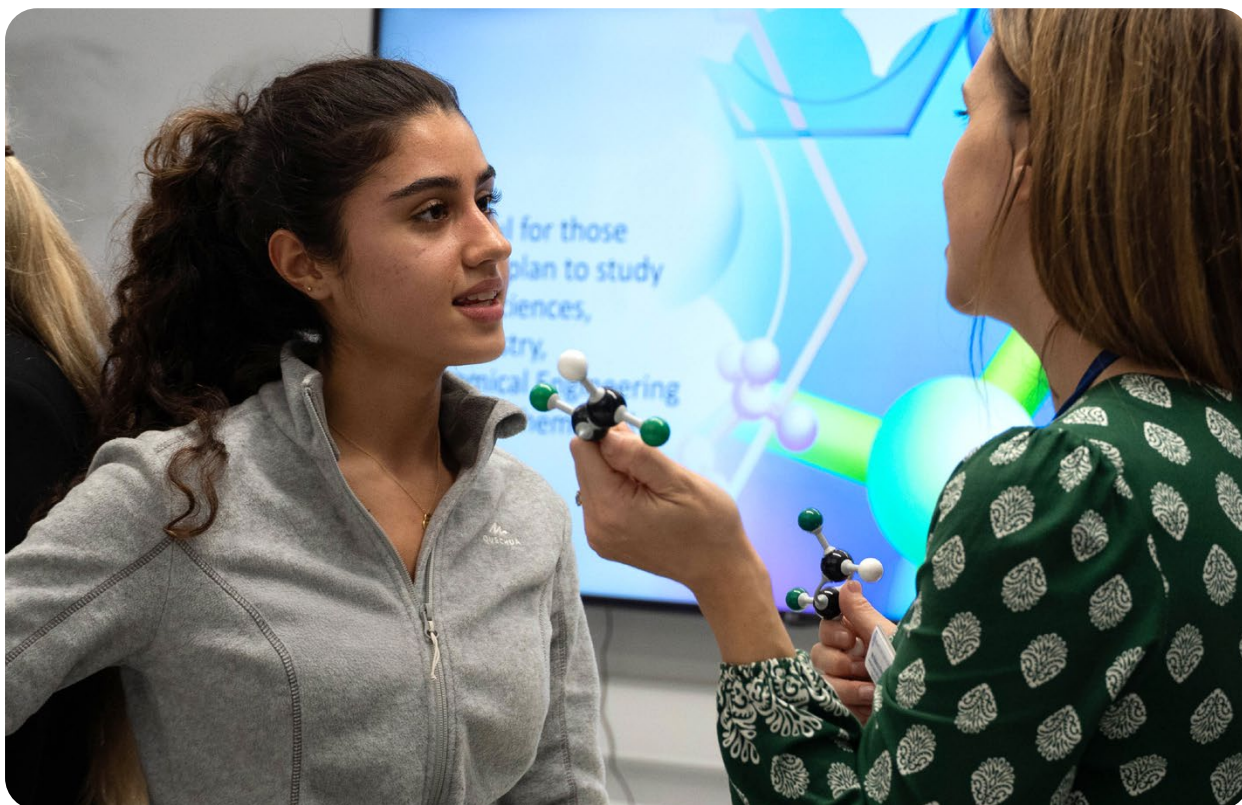
Each time you retrieve something after a gap, the brain reinforces that pathway. This is why spacing and retrieval are often used together.

## 8. Why Sleep Is a Study Strategy

Sleep is not time lost - it is part of learning. During sleep:

- The brain replays what you studied
- Important information is strengthened
- Knowledge is transferred into long-term memory

Studying without enough sleep limits how much learning can actually stick, no matter how long you revise.



## 9. Why Teachers Teach These Techniques

Teachers do not teach study skills to make learning harder. They teach them because these methods:

- Match how the brain builds memory
- Reduce last-minute panic
- Improve long-term recall
- Prepare students for exam conditions

Effective study techniques often feel uncomfortable because **real learning changes the brain.**

- If your studying feels easy, your brain may not be learning much.

- If your studying feels hard, your brain is building new pathways.

- The most effective study methods don't always feel productive - but they work.

- That's why we teach them.



**FRANCIS HOLLAND**  
SLOANE SQUARE

39 Graham Terrace, London SW1W 8JF

[www.fhs-sw1.org.uk](http://www.fhs-sw1.org.uk)

