



# Year 8 Revision

Tips and Techniques for Effective and Efficient Revision and  
Subject Specific Exam Content Guidance

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# Wellbeing

Revision can be stressful for students. It is important to remember to take care of your health as a priority. Make sure you incorporate healthy habits in your revision schedules.

- Sleep comfortably: during stressful periods, it can be difficult to sleep properly, but that is when your body requires rest the most. 8 hours a night minimum, phone away from your bed!
- Importance of Sleep to Learning: Take regular short breaks – also have longer periods of downtime built into your schedule, and do not over-work yourself.
- Do frequent short exercises – stand up and walk around, do stretches, especially your neck and shoulders. Both your body and mind need to be kept active.
- Drink water and get fresh air – it is important to stay hydrated, and to have your room cool enough to stay awake!
- Eat well – not too many sugary snacks – little and often is best.
- Focus on what you have already done – instead of worrying about the work left to do, reframe your thoughts to focus on your successes. A positive mindset will make it easier to stay motivated. Speak to your tutor for support.

## Tips for Parents/Carers

- Be positive and let them know you are proud of them.
- Praise them for their effort.
- Reframe what they don't yet know as a positive: now they know where to focus.
- Don't let them be overly critical of themselves just because everything isn't right, right now.
- Encourage them to make a detailed revision plan with breaks and relaxation built in.
- Ensure they have a quiet place where they are undisturbed.
- Have regular meals together, opportunities for a conversation.
- Get them to explain things they are learning, ask only sympathetic questions and clarifications.
- Ensure they do some physical activity each day – even if just walking the dog / walking home from school
- Don't let them judge themselves to their peers or siblings.
- Be sympathetic to the fact that they have a lot of work to do and it is a stressful time for them.
- Plan some nice surprises, things to look forward to: favourite food, take away, family films.

## Quick Tips

- Make yourself start however much you don't want to – the hardest bit is then out of the way.
- Take regular short breaks – also have longer periods of downtime built into your schedule.
- Do frequent short exercises – walk around room, do stretches, especially your neck and shoulders.
- Drink enough water and get daily fresh air – air your room and have it cool or you will fall asleep!
- Eat well – not too many sugary snacks – little and often is best, but some treats are essential too.
- Follow your schedule and give yourself treats: a film, a nice meal, a long chat, time on your phone.
- Don't leave the difficult bits until last – RAG rating topics in each subject helps to prioritise.
- Focus on what you have already done and not what is still left to do – remember every little helps!
- At the end of a session – clear away so you can relax properly. Put notes in the right file so you can start the next session straight away. Update your plan.

## The Science of Learning, Memory and Attention

Revising can be hard – especially if you think about it the wrong way. Revising isn't just about getting stuff IN to your brain – it's about being able to get it OUT of your brain when you need it. A lot of scientific research has been done about how the brain (and memory) works, as well as the study methods that work best (see Dunlosky, 2013). Before we look at some revision strategies, it's a good idea to understand a little bit about how your brain (and memory) works.

The most effective way to learn is to have information move from the working memory to the long-term memory (LTM). If there is no change in long term memory, then no learning has taken place. Long-term memory has unlimited storage capacity, and once remembered, information stored within LTM can be stored there indefinitely. By comparison, your working memory and attention is far more limited (lasts 30 seconds and can only store 9 items of information at once). Therefore, the revision you do must be aimed at transferring information from your working memory to your long-term memory. Knowledge does not stay in your long-term memory unless you think about it regularly.

As your short-term memory and attention is limited, it is important to limit distractions when revising. In particular, limiting your access to technology like a mobile phone will help you to concentrate, as will having a calm area to work in. In addition, it is much easier to learn and recall information when we are physically and mentally well-rested. The next section will give you some more information about this.

# Setting Yourself up

Make a realistic and detailed **revision timetable** that includes work, hobbies, and relaxation time. Planning is an essential investment of time to be effective! Your revision plan needs to be flexible, though, have some 'buffer sessions', as some topics may take longer and that is ok!

- Break down each subject into topics, gain an overview. Use the online specification to help.
- Identify what you already know, and the parts you need more time on, RAG rate topics.
- Break all topics into 45-60-minute chunks so you see yourself progress through the work; your concentration lapses after an hour.
- Know what you aim achieve in each session – by the end of this session I will have done...
- Tick off what you have done so you can see your progress, change the RAG rating colours.
- Take short breaks after work sessions. Have a definite finishing time each day, then relax.
- Get files or folders for each subject and organise your notes for each subject. It helps you have an overview of the task ahead and saves you time by not having to look for papers.
- Keep all the equipment you need handy (pens, calculator, paper, notebooks, postcards, post-its).
- Use a suitable quiet place – make sure you are not interrupted or distracted.
- **Put phones away till your breaks and then enjoy.**

# Creating an effective revision timetable

1. Identify time slots on different days when you will realistically be able to revise;
  - a. Do not over-promise how much revision you will do – you will just disappoint yourself!
  - b. Do not sacrifice the things you love (sport / band practice / favourite TV show) to revise – a healthy balance is crucial.
2. Identify the subjects (and topics within the subjects) which your reports and assessments show you need to focus on
  - a. It is tempting to revise your favourite subjects most often – don't!
  - b. Refer to your teacher's advice on what to revise and how to revise – there is never any need to 'guess' what to do!
3. Change your revision timetable each week
  - a. As you become more confident with some subjects and topics, you can de-prioritise them.
  - b. As you get closer to the exams, your focus will change from re-learning knowledge, to applying that knowledge to practice questions.

Day of the week	Time slot	Subject	Particular Topic/Content	How I will revise it
Wednesday	15.45 – 16.15 (before orchestra)	History	Tudors – how they came to power, the conflicts during their reign and how society changed before their loss of power.	Timeline of significant events from memory, then check against textbook and exercise book to fill in gaps, then do timeline again from memory.

# Key Principles of Effective Revision

- Successful revision involves doing something with the information, applying it, NOT Copying/Reading/Highlighting! This is essential so that your brain makes connections, remembers all the information and how to apply it. If you are 'busy' but not having to think hard about something, then you are not revising effectively.
- Make a plan: Look at the specification and any self-assessments you have done regarding your knowledge of a particular subject. Identify key areas of weakness and make a list of topics to revise. Research the assessment, are there past papers, mark schemes and examiners reports you can look at? What sort of questions occur frequently?
- Get into a routine: Set aside regular time periods to revise, ideally at the same time each week. Have all your study materials prepared before you start and don't allow yourself to get distracted. Keep a record of the progress you are making!
- Deliberate Practice: Revision needs to be both purposeful and systematic. This means that organising a method of breaking down whatever task it is you want to improve on into its core elements is imperative. Rather than practising 'the whole thing' you practise getting better at the individual steps in order to achieve your goal of improvement in 'the whole thing'. Active revision is needed in order to learn. Re-reading notes will not help if you do not engage with the material, your brain needs to process the information and work with it in some way in order for it to enter into your Long-Term Memory.
- Retrieval Practice: This is the practice of consistently accessing information from memory. A large portion of learning occurs when you focus on remembering the information they were taught. Instead of reading the same information consistently, it is more effective to actively recall the information over time. There is even evidence to suggest that retrieval practice multiplies the number of 'routes' to stored ideas in your memory, making them easier to access because you've tried, even if you can't quite remember them now!
- Spacing and Interleaving: Leaving time between moments of revision is a key aspect of transferring information from the working memory to LTM. As demonstrated in The Forgetting Curve, repeated attempts to review the information leads to higher rates of memory retention. Finally, following this principle also dissuades the use of lastminute cramming as a reasonable revision practice. Be aware too of the "fluency illusion". This is the feeling that you know something well which you have just re-read. You need to be sure that the information goes into your long-term memory; by spacing out your learning and regularly testing yourself you can be sure that you actually know what you have been revising.

# Active revision

Remember! Successful revision involves doing something with the information, applying it – this is essential so your brain makes connections and remembers all the information and how to apply it.

- Produce detailed notes – don't just copy out from the books! Colour code to aid memory.
- Do something active with the work: annotate, summarise, ask questions, reduce notes as you remember more and need less prompts. Extend notes from memory then check. Don't just read!
- Use different techniques – key word cards, flashcards, post-its, posters, learning maps, recordings, highlighting, chants and songs.
- Revisiting notes after a day, a week and a month really works. Eventually, 5 repeats on different occasions to remember before the summer.
- Test yourself or get someone to help test you.
- Explain what you have learnt to other people or to yourself out loud.
- Examples of how to achieve a greater degree of understanding and **synthesis** of a topic:
  - Divide the page into two columns, with the one on the right much larger than the one on the left. The left is used for key words/ terms/headings; the right is used for explanations and examples, in shorthand written form. The last few lines of the page are left blank for questions or for a short summary of the session.
  - Use concentric circles, starting with the key fact of the topic in the middle and adding layers of information as you move out of the middle.
- Notes should be frequently reviewed, added to and re-made in the important transformation process that has to take place during revision process.
- Use **practice exam papers** – this is one of the most valuable methods of revision. Look at the mark scheme carefully: what are the success criteria.
- Mark your work, but look beyond the mark at what went well and how to improve. Be reflective.
- Get one good revision aid for each subject – use the advice and feedback of your subject teachers.
- Ask for help when you need it – discuss work with friends, parents, and teachers.
- Try not to get stressed, eat well, relax regularly and sleep enough. Take regular exercise.
- Believe in yourself, be positive. If you think you can succeed you will!

# Individual Revision Techniques

- Flashcards: These are clearly useful for remembering facts, vocabulary and key terms/definitions (write 'questions' on one side, then 'answers' on the other side of a piece of paper, then test yourself. You must then do something with that knowledge i.e. apply it in an explanation or practice exam question. Make sure you spend more time using the flashcards than making them.
- Practice Answers: Predict what the exam questions might be (look in your text book and exercise book for what you've been previously asked), then write answers for those potential questions. Swap with a partner to give suggestions for improvements.
- Mindmaps: you need to engage actively with your revision - drawing mind-maps can be helpful if you make meaningful connections between different ideas – start with a blank sheet of paper (don't just copy from an open book, as that involves no hard thinking) - label your 'links' and explain why those 2 ideas are linked. Labelled diagrams with explanations are useful too. Being able to CONNECT the different branches in the diagram will re-enforce the information and make it easier to recall. This is far more effective than spider diagrams, which see knowledge as isolated.
- Create schemata: A schema is a mental template, and functions as a web of interconnected knowledge about a particular topic. When creating schemata, it is possible to link simple concepts, but also concepts that lead to hierarchical thinking. Therefore, they are more sophisticated than the "chunking" which happens in working memory. Connecting information in this way makes it easier to recall more complex, interconnected, ideas.
- Condensed Notes: Put 'cues' (questions / main points / prompts / clues) in the margin on the left-hand side, then 'flesh out' the right-hand side with what you can remember about that cue. Then open your book and add to it. Then try again – you should be adding more and more information each time. The Cornell Note Taking System.
- Self-Quizzing: Look, cover, say, check, improve. As you approach the end of a revision session, write yourself a 10-question quiz (make it tough, not just facts but testing your understanding). At the start of the next revision session, give it a go. Focus your revision on only the bits you got wrong.

## Discussion Revision

1. Select & Justify: with your partner, challenge them to 'select' the most significant facts, ideas, concepts or terms in a topic, then get them to 'justify' why they have chosen these as the most significant. Try and convince them that they are wrong, by referring to alternative ideas that you think are more important – ensure you tell them why! Listen carefully to what they say and give them feedback at the end as to how convincing they are and whether in reality their answer might be right.
2. Just a Minute: Choose a topic or key term. Your partner has to talk for one minute about that topic/term. No pauses, hesitations, slips or repetitions are allowed. 3 'strikes' and they are out, leaving you to finish off the minute's worth of talking. If they go too far off topic, that counts as a 'strike' too. It must be relevant to the topic/term.
3. Be the Teacher: Choose a topic/idea that you find tough. Your partner has to teach it to you from scratch – ask them to explain themselves, question them when they rush over something to quickly and pick them up on anything you remain unclear on. You could also get a partner/sibling/parent to get you to explain the links between elements of your mind map.

# Ten Tips for Parents: How can you help your child during revision?

1. Encourage them to make a detailed revision plan with breaks and relaxation built in.
2. Ensure they have a quiet place where they are undisturbed.
3. Have regular meals together, opportunities for a conversation.
4. Ask about their revision, show an interest in some of the topics.
5. Get them to explain things they are learning, ask only sympathetic questions and clarifications.
6. Involve them in planning the activities during the holidays.
7. Be sympathetic to the fact that they have a lot of work to do and it is a stressful time for them.
8. Plan some nice surprises, things to look forward to: favourite food, take away, family films.
9. Praise them for their effort.
10. Be positive and let them know you are proud of them.

## What to Avoid

- Avoid anything 'passive' – you need to make your brain think hard!
- Do NOT listen to Music while you study - you could perform 60% better without (Research Evidence).
- Do NOT distract others – others will want to develop good study habits, even if you don't!
- Do NOT simply read through or copy from exercise/text/revision books – it doesn't work!
- Do NOT stick on the same subject or topic for endless hours.
- Do NOT waste your time fidgeting/scribbling/drawing/talking – get into exam habits!
- Do NOT just highlight 'key information' – do something active with it instead!
- Do NOT revise the topics/subjects that you know already or are already excellent at!
- Do NOT have your mobile in the same room as you – it can make you 20% less effective (Research Evidence).

# Who to contact for help?

- For any subject-specific queries, check in a book, look online, ask a friend and then if not, ask your teacher on Teams.
- For any questions about the exams themselves, ask your form tutor.
- The school councillor and school nurse are available - email [studentsupport@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:studentsupport@reading-school.co.uk) to book an appointment
- You can book onto 'stress-less' workshops for free online: 17-25 Stress Less Workshops | Talking Therapies Berkshire NHS ([www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk](http://www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk))
- For any concerns about your or your friend's wellbeing, ask your form tutor or Head of House in the first instance
- If it is more serious or urgent, email [safeguarding@reading-school.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@reading-school.co.uk)
- No5 - Free Counselling Services - Reading's young person's counselling centre, dedicated to providing free, confidential counselling and emotional support to anyone between the ages of 11-25. Contact by text 07984 357551 or Tel: 0118 9015668
- Home - ARC ([www.arcweb.org.uk](http://www.arcweb.org.uk)) - Wokingham's young person's counselling service contact them on Tel: 0118 9776710
- Reading Relate\* | Relate - can offer children and young people's counselling, as well as family counselling for any young person who's having problems. Whether it's depression, mental health concerns, or issues with parents or people at school. Contact Tel: 0300 0032324

# Subject Specific Guidance

Subject	Examinable content	Format of exam	How to revise effectively in this subject
<b>Art</b>	Assessment is ongoing and holistic — there is no end of year examination for Art or Photography. Respond promptly to feedback from staff in lessons, always try your best and keep refining as you go.	N/A	N/A
<b>Biology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content: Respiration, senses and the skeleton, photosynthesis, plus all Year 7 content.</li> <li>Practical content: Testing a leaf for starch, oxygen production in pond weed, stomatal density on a leaf, respiration in yeast, reaction time.</li> </ul>	Multiple choice plus short answer questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use own exercise book and coloured sheet 'Year 8 Biology topics 2025-26'.</li> <li>Use feedback from graded tasks and assessments.</li> <li>Practise labelling the skeleton, eye, ear and cells of a leaf.</li> <li>Learn the balanced chemical equations.</li> <li>Create mind maps for each topic area.</li> <li>Activate 1 p2-11, 28-39; Activate 2 p14-15, 18, 19, 22-25, 30-33.</li> </ul>
<b>Chemistry</b>	All topics fully covered this year with assumed knowledge of Year 7 topics: chemical reactions, metals and acids, and the earth.	Multiple choice plus short answer questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use topic mind maps or revision flashcards — do something active.</li> <li>Topic checklists will be shared by teachers. Use these to check understanding then revisit gaps.</li> <li>Textbook pages 40-52, 92-108, 110-124.</li> <li>Useful website: KS3 Chemistry — BBC Bitesize.</li> </ul>
<b>Computer Science</b>	Computer systems, networking and Python coding.	60-minute online series of multiple choice and short text entry questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources: lesson slides on Teams, class notebook and BBC Bitesize or W3 Schools Python tutorials.</li> <li>Techniques: review content and notes; make flashcards for key terms; practise Python in EduBlocks; practise calculations using online calculators.</li> </ul>
<b>Drama</b>	Devising practical: NEA exam style completed in class time.	Performance of your stimulus-driven devised piece.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rehearse effectively in class.</li> <li>Collaborate on Teams with your group ahead of the performance.</li> </ul>
<b>English</b>	Analysis skills, as practised during lessons when we interpreted author's choices of language and style.	Reading paper, as practised in class.	Read and enjoy as many fiction and non-fiction books from a range of genres as you can.
<b>French</b>	Vocabulary from topics, word order and present tense verb endings (including <i>être</i> , <i>avoir</i> , <i>faire</i> and <i>aller</i> ), near future, past tenses in <i>-er</i> , <i>-ir</i> , <i>-re</i> verbs.	Reading, listening, translation.	Exercise book, resources in files on Teams, Quizlet vocab.

Subject	Examinable content	Format of exam	How to revise effectively in this subject
<b>Geography</b>	All topics covered in Year 8, up to and including disease. A checklist of everything you need to know is on Teams.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Part 1: multiple choice.</li> <li>Part 2: data analysis of maps and graphs.</li> <li>Part 3: a decision-making exercise. Use both the information given and your own knowledge; explain points fully; show awareness of both sides; come to a clear conclusion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your green book — first choice for revision, alongside the PPTs on Teams.</li> <li>BBC Bitesize is useful for specific items (eg types of weather measurement).</li> <li>Effective Geography revision is active, carefully planned (use the Teams checklist), spaced out and includes practising data analysis, graph and map skills.</li> </ul>
<b>German</b>	Vocabulary from textbook and Quizlet, word order rules, present tense verb endings including haben and sein.	Reading, listening, translation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn vocabulary on Quizlet, Kerboodle or vocab sheets — both ways (meaning and spelling).</li> <li>Go through past reading and listening exercises in the Kerboodle book.</li> <li>Watch 'Easy German' on YouTube to familiarise yourself with German.</li> </ul>
<b>Latin</b>	Vocabulary from the Entry Level specification and additional vocabulary sheet. Grammar from Chapters 1-5.	Comprehension and translation paper.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use word connections with English.</li> <li>Use VTP6 or Quizlet to test yourself on Chapters 1-5 and Entry Level vocabulary.</li> <li>Write out grammar tables from memory.</li> <li>Repeat grammar tests from class.</li> <li>Redo earlier exercises to practise Latin word order.</li> <li>Use textbook and exercise book to revise grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>History</b>	Content covered this year: Mughals, Industrial Revolution, Empire, Changes to Rights, WWI, WWII.	A mixture of short knowledge-based questions and two longer answer questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use your exercise book.</li> <li>Revise actively using retrieval practice to test your memory and recall skills.</li> <li>Textbooks are available on Kerboodle but are not specific to what we have taught.</li> </ul>
<b>Mandarin</b>	Vocabulary from book (subjects, food, holidays, daily routine, home, jobs), tenses (past and future), prepositions, sentence order, directions.	Reading, listening, writing, speaking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocabulary booklets (practise character writing).</li> <li>Quizlet (shared on Teams) — practise sentence structure and reading.</li> <li>eu.gochinese.net — practise reading and listening.</li> <li>Start from the 2023 past paper and complete one set each week.</li> <li>Use photo cards to revise speaking and learn to ask questions.</li> </ul>
<b>Maths</b>	Mainly Year 8 content; may also assess Year 7 content. For topic list, refer to the Schemes of Work on the class Team channel.	One calculator paper, 70 minutes in length.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>www.mymaths.co.uk</li> <li>Revision packs shared by class teachers after Easter.</li> </ul>

Subject	Examinable content	Format of exam	How to revise effectively in this subject
<b>Music</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The twelve-bar blues — order of the chords and blues scale.</li> <li>Identifying triads in root position.</li> <li>Identifying triads written over multiple instruments.</li> <li>Notating triads (root position and inversions).</li> <li>Writing out the 6 triads which correspond with a given note.</li> </ul>	Short answer questions, including musical notation and composition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer to your Year 7 music workbooks.</li> <li>musictheory.net.</li> </ul>
<b>Physics</b>	All content covered to date: Energy, Light, Electricity, and Thermal Physics (conduction, convection, radiation and definition of heat) covered in the penultimate half term.	Mixture of multiple choice, numerical and written-answer questions, including one 6-mark extended response.	<p><b>Do</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start with the areas you feel least confident with, identified from past topic test scores, homework feedback and classwork feedback.</li> <li>Use coloured pens to outline strengths and weaknesses in your answers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Do not</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revise content you are already confident with.</li> <li>Just memorise formulae to regurgitate in the exam.</li> <li>Just read your notes or textbook.</li> <li>'Cram' the night before.</li> <li>Make impressive flashcards you don't use.</li> <li>Highlight the textbook</li> </ul>
<b>Spanish</b>	Vocabulary from book (chores, describing your house, describing your town, giving directions, school life), verb endings (present, future and imperfect tenses), adjective agreements, prepositions, comparisons.	Reading, listening, translation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocabulary booklets, Claro 1 on Kerboodle, Quizlet, Wordwall, Spanishboat.com, languagesonline.org.uk.</li> <li>Learn vocabulary both ways (meaning and spelling).</li> <li>Go through past reading and listening exercises.</li> <li>Watch familiar films in Spanish with English subtitles.</li> </ul>
<b>Theology &amp; Philosophy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Science and Religion: myth, creation stories, Genesis: the biblical accounts, teleological argument, cosmological argument.</li> <li>Islam: the Quran, the five pillars, Islam and Christianity comparison.</li> </ul>	<b>60-minute exam including 1, 2, 4, 8 and an extended 12-mark essay question.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lesson PPTs on Teams channel.</li> <li>Revision resources on Teams including 2-page topic summaries and essay plans.</li> <li>Essay structure outline available on Teams.</li> <li>The best revision technique is to create a 30-mark essay plan and then practise writing it in full.</li> </ul>