

Learner Revision Guide

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About this guide

This guide provides some suggestions on how to plan your revision and some general advice about good revision techniques.

There are tick boxes and text boxes throughout to help you record your progress. You can either print this guide to write on it, or use it electronically and type directly into text boxes. Make sure you don't forget to save this file to your device.

You should use this revision guide alongside the support of your teacher.

You might also find the Cambridge *Learner Revision Guide* and the subject-specific Cambridge *Learner Guides* helpful. You can find these on our website, here, under 'Study Resources'.

By the end of this guide, you should know:

- ways to help you plan your revision
- how to use revision planners
- some basic revision skills
- some 'top tips' for revising.

Planning your revision

It is important that you plan your revision in plenty of time for the examinations and that you develop a revision technique that works for you.

A well-structured revision plan can give you the best chance of success in your examinations. As early as possible (at least six weeks before the examinations for each subject) identify the time you will spend revising and **schedule** slots for revision of each subject that you are taking examinations in.

To create a revision schedule, you could use an overall planner for the weeks leading up to the examinations. You could then create weekly revision plans at the start of each week, which include the detail of which subjects you will revise and when.

There are some example planners on the next page but there are lots of other ways you can do this.

Planning takes time but will help you be more productive.

Use the revision checklist in the *Cambridge Learner Guide* for your subjects to help you plan your revision schedule.

Use the following as a checklist to help you create your schedule.

Write down the dates and times of each of the examinations you are taking, in a calendar, diary or planner.

Work out how much time you have before each examination, so you can leave yourself plenty of time to revise each subject.

For each subject make sure you:

know how long each examination paper is

know what each examination paper is going to assess

work out how much time you can spend on each topic so that you revise all topics.

It is important to have breaks in order to stay alert and productive, so make sure you:

include one rest day per week, or break this up into shorter rest breaks across a week

include at least two hours of rest before bed time; working too late is unlikely to be productive

take regular breaks during revision; revising for hours without a break will overload you

have short revision sessions and short breaks between each session

know ways to relax during your breaks; for example, physical exercise can be good during breaks.

It is important to be flexible and realistic, so make sure you:

include most days leading up to the exams **and** include any days or times when you are not able to revise (for example due to attending school, eating meals, participating in sports and hobbies)

are honest with yourself about how much time you can really spend on each subject and topic

don't get upset about plans that did not work – think of new plans that are easier to achieve.

It might help to:

include a mixture of subjects each day

break up the material in your subjects into manageable chunks.

Plan to **return** to topics and **review** them; revisiting a topic means that you can check that you still remember the material and it should help you to recall more of the topic.

Include doing past paper examinations in your plan.

Revision planners

There are many different planners, calendars and timetables you could use to plan your revision. The ones provided in this section are just examples. They range from an overview of all the weeks leading up to the first examination, to the detail of what you will be revising each day.

Use colour-coding for different subjects, time off, examinations and so on. Plan which subjects you are going to revise in which slots. You could then add more detail such as topics to be covered. The planner can be as detailed and large and colourful as you like. Remember to tick off sections as you complete them and to review your plans if needed.

Overview planner

In the example below, the first examination is on 1 June. Here, the box has just been highlighted but you should write down the paper number, the subject and the time of the examination. You would do this for **all the examinations** you have. This helps you to visualise how much time you have before each examination. You can use this to block out whole or half days when you can't revise. You can also include as much or as little detail about your daily or weekly revision plan as you like.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4

Weekly planner

This allows you to input greater detail about what you will revise each week. In the example below, each day is split into three.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							

In the example below, each day has been split into 1 hour slots so you can include even more detail.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
08:00 – 09:00							
09:00 – 10:00							
10:00 – 11:00							
11:00 – 12:00							
12:00 – 13:00							
13:00 – 14:00							
14:00 – 15:00							
15:00 – 16:00							
16:00 – 17:00							
17:00 – 18:00							
18:00 – 19:00							
19:00 – 20:00							
20:00 – 21:00							

General revision advice

Here are some useful tips to help you with your revision. Use this as a checklist.

Make accurate notes during the course.

Look at the revision checklists in the *Cambridge Learner Guide* for your subjects and be really clear what topics you need to know.

Check that your notes are complete and make sense.

If you need to improve your notes, you could:

ask your teacher for help, especially if you don't understand some of your notes

ask a friend if you can copy missed work, but make sure you understand it

find more information on topics using your teacher, textbook, the library or the internet; your teacher will have a full copy of the syllabus

use different note-taking methods such as colour-coded notes, tables, spider-diagrams and mind maps; Venn diagrams can be very useful when you need to compare and contrast things

Make lots of new notes: they don't have to be neat, you can use scrap paper or a digital notepad; remember that the process of writing and reviewing your notes helps you to remember information.

Be organised: keep your notes, textbooks, exercise books and websites to hand.

Find a revision method that works for you; this might be working alone, with friends, with parents, online, at school, at home or a mixture of many different methods.

Have a clear revision plan, schedule or timetable for each subject you are studying.

Vary your revision activities: your revision programme should do more than remind you what you can and cannot do – it should help you to improve.

Use revision checklists in the *Cambridge Learner Guide* for your subjects to analyse how confident you feel in each topic.

Try doing some past examination papers; use the mark schemes to assess yourself.

Use plenty of pens, colours, paper and card of different sizes to make your notes more fun.

Test yourself in different ways, for example by:

playing 'Teach the topic' (see [page 10](#))

using Question and Answer cards (see [page 10](#))

answering real exam questions (see [page 11](#))

Buy a good revision guide.

You might also find it helpful to:

Target single issues such as correcting those little things you always get wrong, or reminding yourself about any facts/issues/skills that you have never been too sure of.

Spend most of your time on specific skills, knowledge or issues that you have found more difficult when practising them, either during revision or earlier in the course during tests or mock exams.

Spend some time focussing on your strengths as well, so that you can improve.

Top tips for revision

1. Mind maps

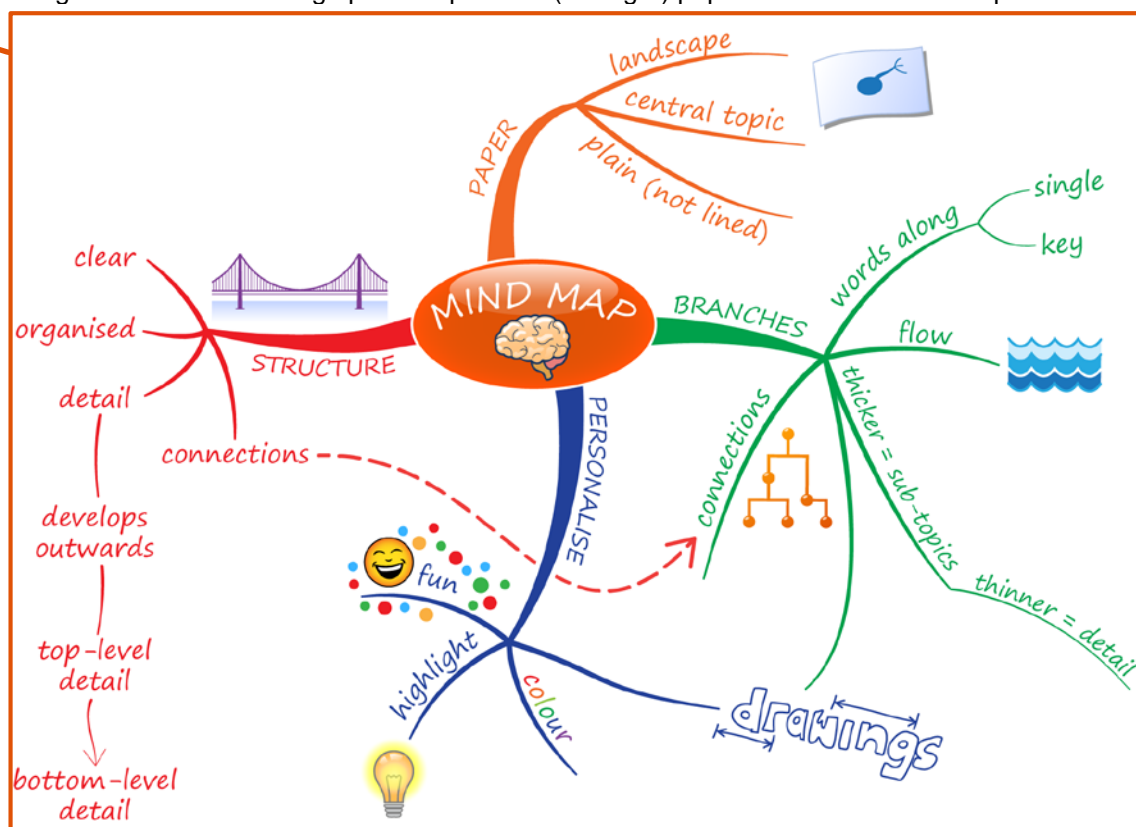
Mind maps are a great way to revise the links between different factors or to explore a larger topic. They can also be used to brainstorm your ideas.

- i) Use a blank sheet of paper and turn it on its side (landscape).
- ii) Put the topic title in the middle of the page and build the mind map outwards using lines called 'branches'.
 - The first branches are from the central topic to sub-topics; draw these as thick lines.
 - Add new branches from the sub-topics to include more detail; draw these as thinner lines.
 - Add even more detail to a point by adding more branches.

This creates a hierarchy of information from 'overview' (the thick branches) to 'fine detail' (thinnest branches).

- iii) Write single key words or phrases along a branch and add drawings for visual impact.
- iv) Use different colours, highlighter pens, symbols and arrows to highlight key facts or issues.

It is a good idea to use a large piece of plain A3 (or larger) paper and lots of coloured pens.



2. Teach the topic

This is a very simple but effective technique that focuses on knowledge recall. It tests the brain and rehearses the information you need to know for a certain topic and so will help your revision.

- i) Create some topic cards with key bullet points of information on. Leave space for ticks.
- ii) Give these to your parents, family, friends or whoever you want.
- iii) Give yourself 10 minutes maximum to teach your audience the main points of the topic. You could use a mini-whiteboard or flipchart to help.
- iv) Your audience tick off all the points you mention in your presentation and give you a final score.

The brain loves competition, so if you do not score full marks, you can repeat and try again the next day, or compete against friends. This system of repeat and rehearsal is very effective, especially with more complex topics, and doesn't take much preparation.

3. Question and answer (Q & A) cards

This is very similar to 'Teach the topic' but less formal and less public for those who dislike performing in front of others. It tests knowledge recall and rehearses the information you need to know for a certain topic.

- i) Pick a topic and create two sets of cards: question cards and answer cards. You might find it helpful to make the question cards a different size or use different coloured card for answers.
- ii) Make sure you have the topic, or something appropriate depending on what you are focusing on, as a heading on each card. The questions should test your knowledge and understanding of key areas of the course.
- iii) A friend or family member uses the cards to test you in short 5 or 10 minute periods at any time during the day.
- iv) You could also do this alone by reading the questions to yourself, giving the answer and then checking the correct answer card.
- v) This game can be adapted by using the cards to find matching pairs: turn all cards face down across the space in front of you. Turn over two cards, leaving them where they are. If they match (one is a question card and the other is the corresponding answer card) pick up the pair and put them to one side. If they don't match, try to remember where they are and what is on each card, then turn them back over. Turn over two other cards. Continue until you have matched all pairs.

4. Question paper and mark schemes

Looking at past question papers and the mark scheme helps to familiarise yourself with what to expect and what the standard is.

- i) Ask your teacher for past paper questions with mark schemes for the course; ask your teacher for help to make sure you are answering the correct questions and to simplify the mark scheme.
- ii) Identify which topic a given question relates to so that you have a bank of questions for each topic; you might need to ask your teacher to help you do this.
- iii) Once you have finished revising a topic or unit, time yourself answering some appropriate exam questions. Check the mark schemes to see how well you would have scored or give the answers to your teacher to check.
- iv) Add details or notes to the mark scheme where you missed out on marks in your original answers using a different coloured pen. Use these notes when you revise and try the question again later.

You can find plenty of past exam papers and mark schemes on the Cambridge website

<http://www.cie.org.uk/i-want-to/resource-centre/>

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