 **Effective Revision** **Strategies**

The revision process:

There are three stages to effective revision:

1. **Review a topic** – this includes preparing your revision materials such as writing out revision notes, making flash cards, drawing posters, etc. This should be active not passive (i.e. not reading!)
2. **Practise/learn the material** – This includes any activities that make sure you learn and remember the material from your revision materials. You can use any of the ‘effective revision techniques’ below.
3. **Check your understanding** and go over anything you need to – re-draft answers and re-study topics.

Effective revision techniques

These are revision techniques that have been proved by research to be effective:

1. Research has shown that you will remember more if you **go over topics multiple times** rather than cramming all of your revision for each subject into one block. So revise one topic and then revisit it again a couple of days later and again a week later. This does mean that you will need to start your revision earlier but you are much less likely to forget it for the exam!
2. **Test yourself** – you should do regular tests of the material you are revising. Methods to do this can include:
3. Flash cards which have a question on the front and an answer on the back.
4. Work through past exam papers – many can be acquired through exam board websites.
5. Simply quiz yourself on key bits of information. You can do this yourself or work with a friend.
6. Create ‘fill the gap’ exercises to complete.
7. Create multiple choice quizzes to complete.
8. Put away your notes and write/sketch everything you know about the topic.
9. **Transforming revision notes into another format** such as flash cards, a mind map or a drawing. This helps to make sure you have processed the information which means you will be able to remember it and understand it.
10. **Use diagrams** –draw a diagram to explain/represent a topic and write a sentence to explain each of the key points. Keep picture simples - use single words/symbols/letters, not sentences or paragraphs, and re-draw the diagram over coming weeks to ensure you remember it.
11. **Be the teacher** – teach the topic you have been revising to another pupil or your parents. This makes sure that you can explain it fully and also helps to identify any areas that you are not sure of.
12. **Ask yourself** **why** answers are true - One of the best things that you can do (either to yourself or with a friend) to support your revision is to ask why an idea or concept is true – and then answer that why question. For example;
* In science, increasing the temperature can increase the rate of a chemical reaction….why?
* In geography, the leisure industry in British seaside towns like Porthcawl in South Wales has deteriorated in the last 4 decades….why?
* In history, the 1929 American stock exchange collapsed. This supported Hitler’s rise to power….why?
1. **Annotate an exam paper** to show the thinking that would go into answering each question (the exam skills rather than the content).

This may include:

* What did you pick out from the question?
* What does the command word tell you?
* What needs to be included for a question of this many marks?
* What information from the case study is relevant?
* What parts of the topic is this referring to?
* Are there any specific terms or definitions you know you will need?
* What evidence or examples could be used to support your answer?

 Example:

1. **Completing past exam questions** – including individual questions and whole papers
2. **Videos** – film yourself talking through answering an exam question or explaining a difficult topic. You can then watch this again.
3. Come up with **concrete examples** of ideas to help you understand and remember them.
4. Summarise a topic into 5 **‘trigger’ words**. These will trigger memories of the key points for that topic. Use these to create more detailed notes or a mind map.
5. Use **rhymes or anagrams** for information that is difficult to remember. For example ‘**R**ichard **O**f **Y**ork **G**ave **B**attle **I**n **V**ain’ to remember the colours of the spectrum

Ineffective techniques

In contrast, the following techniques have been shown to be ineffective for revision (if used alone):

1. Writing summaries of concepts/areas of study
2. Highlighting notes
3. Rereading

This is because they make you feel like you know the material and may help you to remember the information in the short-term (e.g. just after re-reading your notes) but this will not last, so you are more likely to forget the information for the exam.

**These techniques should be used to highlight important information and make your revision notes** but not as ways to help you remember that material.