

How do I use this guide?

This guide has been compiled in consultation with teachers and parents to navigate the difficult, and often confusing, revision period before GCSEs. This guide will hopefully reassure and support parents and students on action they need to be taking regarding their studies. It outlines the expectations, routines and general survival techniques.

It is recommended for parents and students to sit together and read through this guide; this should address areas of contention and realistic expectations resulting in a culture of study in the home.

Why do I need to revise?

If the student is lacking in motivation towards GCSEs in general then consider the following points:

- Many college offers are conditional based on the student having an English and Maths GCSE.
- If students go to college without the required GCSEs, they are often made to retake them. Get it over and done with first time!
- Retaking can put additional time pressures on their chosen college course as well as time they could be socialising, meeting new people and any additional activities such as part-time jobs and learning to drive.
- Most jobs require an English and Maths GCSE.
- Core subjects only take place for 9 hours over a fortnight and are often having to teach content until the last few weeks. This will not be adequate time to go over everything covered in a 2 year course therefore independent study is necessary.

How do I revise?

Students lack the self-discipline to enforce some of these measures therefore it is necessary for parents to support this. The following points are not recommended to 'punish' the student but are proven strategies to aid concentration.

Many students are unsure of how to revise productively or do not know where to begin. The following points outline expectations for this:

- Alone in a quiet room.
- No phone in the room. Turn it off, hide it outside, or give it to a parent. (On average, a 16 year old checks their phones 7 times an hour. Your brain needs at least 20 uninterrupted minutes to reach full functionality)
- Buy nice stationary or use bubl.us or [MindMup](http://MindMup.com).

- Revise for no longer than 1 hour without a break. Use Pomodoro timing technique if you want: 25 minutes on, 5 minutes off.
- No music or music with no lyrics played quietly (your brain literally divides your concentration on the work and lyrics)
- Accept that some days you just aren't productive and don't beat yourself up over it (these happen once in a blue moon- not every day)
- Revise at a desk or table, not in bed or on the sofa. A desk or table is purposeful.
- Stock up on drinks and healthy snacks (not high in sugar or you will crash later) or ask parents to make a cup of tea every hour or so.
- Start early when you are least tired. Your brain is at its weakest just before bed.
- Get a decent night's sleep (at least 8 hours).

What tasks should I be completing?

Revision style is very personal to each student. Some strategies:

- Detailed mind-maps (don't waste time on making them pretty)
- Copying quotes or other facts out 5 times each day so that it becomes muscle memory
- Make a poster on key concepts and stick it in the bathroom
- Post-its by the kettle or by the mirror
- Get a parent to test you using flashcards you have made
- Teach the concept to a parent or sibling
- Taking notes from the suggested videos below

Below are some suggestions of specific tasks for English:

Macbeth

1. Write out the plot in 200 words.
2. Summarise each character in 100 words.
3. Identify the key themes in the play.
4. For each theme find 3 quotes. Write them out 5 times every day. Sing them to the tune of humpty dumpty. Just memorise them!
5. Open the play on a random page. Annotate it for language devices/key words/ audience reaction/structure.
6. Write an analysis paragraph of the page you annotated. Bring it to me- I will mark it.
7. Draw a graph for Macbeth/Lady Macbeth/Macduff and plot how each character develops using key quotes.
8. What were each of the apparitions and what did they symbolise?
9. Make a list of key scenes. Annotate these for language and structure.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T-PKotyoxys>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/topics/zwws39q>

<https://www.yorknotes.com/gcse/macbeth/revision-cards>

<https://revisionworld.com/a2-level-level-revision/english-literature-gcse-level/macbeth-william-shakespeare>

<http://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/macbeth/>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6sQUS_HEDPQ

http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/english_literature/dramamacbeth/

An Inspector Calls

1. Draw a graph for Older Birlings/Young Birlings/Inspector and plot how each character develops using key quotes.
2. Summarise each character in 100 words.
3. List Priestley's beliefs. Compare them to the Inspector's.
4. List things likely to have affected Priestley when writing (wars, class, gender, hierarchy, politics) and find a key quote proving each one.
5. Explain how the Birlings represent different values at the time (e.g. Mr Birling=capitalism)
6. Explain the incidences that involved each Birling in Eva's life. What is each of them guilty of?
7. Look up the seven deadly sins, who is which one? Why? 300 words
8. What does the end of the play tell us and what theories could be attached to it? 200 words
9. Who takes and does not take responsibility in the play? Give quotes.
10. Make a list of key themes in the play.
11. For each theme find 3 quotes. Write them out 5 times every day. Create an interpretive dance to them. Just memorise them!!!!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7EVqywKAe-w> (This man is annoying but it is a good lesson)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ohShu4gfT6o>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kOzHriW91Ng>

http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/english_literature/dramainspectorcalls/

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/topics/zxmb4j6>

<https://www.yorknotes.com/gcse/an-inspector-calls-york-notes-for-gcse-new-edition/revision-cards>

A Christmas Carol

1. How does Scrooge develop? Give quotes, make a graph.
2. Summarise each stave in 100 words.
3. How do the events he sees in stave 2 (ghost of past) impact who he is at the start of the novella?
4. How do the scenes he watches during stave 3 (present) make him begin to change?
5. To what extent could you say the events in stave 4 lead Scrooge to have an epiphany?
6. Is Scrooge fully redeemed by the end of the novella? How do you know?
7. Read each ghost symbolically. 500 words.
8. Dickens wants the novel to include the idea of 'social change'. How does he do this? (think of Scrooge's views, the Cratchits, family, class)
9. What moral does *A Christmas Carol* have? How is this shown throughout the text?
10. Open the novella on any page. Annotate the language and structure used.
11. Write a paragraph (PECLAS) on the annotations you made.
12. How do the characters of the Cratchits and Fred juxtapose Scrooge?
13. Make a list of key themes in the play.

14. For each theme find 3 quotes. Write them out 5 times every day. Bake them in a cake. Just

MEMORISE THEM!!!!!!

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/topics/zcs8qty>

<http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/christmascarol/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/z84k87h/revision>

<https://www.yorknotes.com/gcse/a-christmas-carol-2017/revision-cards>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qUZwAZHf8kY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GYBRPUUSHQY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dbjYyZRWGsE&list=PL5zQRpiKI0Rz6Dnf6iqeAKVfiIZVmGF2b>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/mrbruff/search?query=A+Christmas+Carol>

Poetry

1. Sort the poems into the three types on conflict: inner, between two people, between groups.
2. Link every poem to a different one based on theme: e.g. race, nature, parents
3. Choose a pair of linked poems and write a comparison of them. Remember this should be based on theme (e.g. both the poems present the theme of conflict with nature. Poem A uses metaphor, poem B uses dialogue etc.) Bring it in to me to mark!
4. Create flash cards on all the key terminology. Test yourself regularly.
5. Write down a 15 word summary of every poem without looking!

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7K6t2DMY9MA2f2eD_k0SK5OsonilYMxw

Language

1. Pick any random non-fiction text, decide its purpose (persuade, describe etc) and annotate how it achieves its purpose.
2. Pick any random fiction text. Annotate and then analyse how it engages the reader.
3. Choose two non-fiction texts on the same topic (e.g. letters from charities) and compare how they achieve their purpose.
4. Create flash cards on a range of language devices and test yourself on them.
<https://quizlet.com/671981/ib-english-literary-terms-flash-cards/> (not all of these are relevant but use the ones you have heard me mention before)
5. Look for conventions of articles, letters, speeches, adverts, persuasive writing etc. Learn them.
6. Using an extract from a fiction text, decide on an idea that it shows (e.g. learning something new, creating something, working hard- it could be literally anything!) Then write the TIES columns: Themes, Ideas, Events, Setting. Come up with ways the writer shows the character doing something new (for instance). Then organise these into the columns e.g. making a mistake could go into EVENT column. Now answer the question using these ideas: Evaluate how the writer shows the concept of... [doing something new]

How much should I be revising?

As previously said, many students lack the self-discipline to dedicate themselves to this time. It will come down to parents to supervise internet/gaming/social time to ensure that students adhere to a timetable. This will be an unpopular decision but a necessary one.

The timings below are for all subjects. Obviously this time divided a possible 11 subjects is very little so these are suggested as an absolute minimum.

Tier 1: now until Easter

- 1 hour each evening minimum
- 3 hours over the weekend minimum. This can be divided up or done in one chunk.

Tier 2: Easter until exams

- When still in school during the day: 2 hours each evening minimum.
- Easter holidays and other non-school days: 3.5 hours each day minimum.
- An activity over the weekend is encouraged to get the student out into the fresh air but should not take over their revision time.
- Though this level of dedication to exams is tough, it is the last step and is short lived. It is a means to an end. In 10 years' time, the student will not have huge regrets about missing a social engagement; however they will regret not having their GCSEs. They will also thank their parents for being disciplined when they couldn't do these themselves.

Attached are two revision timetables (one for each tier). There is also an example to help though your one will look different depending on your commitments and how you like to revise. For instance, your 'Time' column could be divided into 20 minute slots, 1 hour slots, you can chart your free time or just have it when you are finished revising. Make it work for you!

It is worth remembering that some subjects, such as English, are two GCSEs so will need additional time dedicated to them.

Parents and students should sit down and fill this timetable in together.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Slot 1						Horse riding	Spanish
Slot 2						Horse riding	Geography
Slot 3						English Lang	Maths
Slot 4						Science	Family dinner
Slot 5	English Lang	Maths	Science	Horse riding	Spanish	Maths	Family dinner
Slot 6	Business	R.E.	Music	Geography	English Lit	English Lit	Music
Slot 7	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Party	

