

THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO GOOD REVISION...

Shock news! Revision is not about reading through your notes...

Yep, it's true I'm afraid...while you might have learnt a little bit from the hours you spent reading through your textbooks and exercise books, I bet you could have learnt so much more if you had tried something a little different!

So what should you do? Teachers are always moaning at you to do something other than read your notes, but what exactly DO they want you to do? If all you have ever done is read through your notes to revise, then it can be tough to know where to begin...

First of all, before you even think about taking a note or reading through an essay, you have to get **ORGANISED!** Sort through your folders and your exercise books. Glue in

loose sheets of paper, make sure your notes are in order, look out your checklists for all your topics. There should be **NO** loose bits of paper anywhere in your room when



you have finished! All your books and notes for each subject should be in one neat pile!

Next, **PRIORITISE!** You have two weeks before exams. It's easy to think it's an

impossible task, you have way too much learn and you may as well just give up now coz you'll never learn it all! Not true at all!...

You looked out your Learning Outcomes, right? Good! Use them! Traffic light them; green for things you do know, orange for things you're a bit unsure of and red for things you really really need to revise! It might take you a while but it will save you time in the long run. How?

I bet you'll be surprised at how many greens you have. These are things you're ok with, and don't need to spend hours revising. What you need to do now is get to work on those red learning outcomes!

So how DO you revise? ...

Sometimes, it's you versus your brain...

Unfortunately, your brain is not always on your side when it comes to revision...**Why?**

If you have been at school all day, you're tired and your brain is too. But exams are coming up so you have no choice but to do some revision. You get out your books and start to read...

Your brain drifts off and you're not really taking in any of the information in front of you. You sit up, stretch and start again. This time your brain is a bit more obliging and you start to focus on some of the information. It sounds good **BUT** I bet you're reading over stuff you already know and avoiding the

things you don't.

Yes, you have been outwitted by your brain! Anything for an easy life, it is reading over things it knows so it doesn't have to work as hard!

So how can you outwit your brain?.....

Inside this issue:

You versus your brain	1
Clue Cards—the expert's guide!	2
Revision—it DOESN'T have to rule your life!	2
Colour is a good thing!	2
Note Taking—the rules!	3
Mighty mnemonics	3
The Post-It Note Technique	3

Golden Rules of Revision...

- **TRAFFIC LIGHT** your learning outcomes. This helps you focus your revision on the things you don't know!
- When you are making notes **NEVER EVER** copy!! Always reword them! This stops your brain switching off!
- **COLOUR** is super important! If your notes are colourful, you are more likely to want to read them!
- Use lots of **DIFFERENT** techniques during your revision session...this will help to stop you getting bored!

Make your world a colourful place...

Picture this. I am giving you two sheets of paper to read. One is a plain A4 piece of paper with black typing on it. The other is an A4 piece of paper but it has pictures and bullet points on it as well as written notes and lots of the words are in different colours. Which one do you choose to read first? Why?

It all comes down to fooling your brain again! If something is interesting to look at, you are more likely to want to read it and focus on it, than if it was just dull black and white.

So how do you make your notes brighter if you've never tried before?...

Keywords should be in bright colours or highlighted to make them stand out! Simply putting down and picking up different coloured pens all the time is



a good way to stop your brain switching off too! Put bubbles around important equations or phrases or quotations too. This also makes it easier to pick the information you need off the page too!



Revision doesn't have to take over your life!...

Exams are coming up in a few months so that means you're going to have to put your life on hold, right?...

NOT NECESSARILY!

The key here is organization! If you are organized, you can still fit everything else in but you **HAVE** to start early!

Revision is best done little and often. You will learn more in three really effective revision sessions done over a

few days, than you will in one long marathon five hour revision session!

You need to put together a revision time table...not one that **LOOKS** good, (and makes you look like you're going to swot furiously for nine hours every day) but one that you can actually stick to, and one that allows you to have a break from revision now and then! Relaxation is important...if you get your brain working hard, reward it with a

rest; go swimming, watch your favourite TV programmes or check your Facebook!

More on building revision timetables later on though...

"If you are organised, it *is* still possible to have a life!"

Clue Cards—the expert's guide to these versatile revision aids!...

We all know how to make them, don't we?...

Take a learning outcome (for example, "name the longest bone in the body") and turn it into a question ("What is the longest bone in the body?"). Write your question on one side of the clue card, and your answer (in this case "femur") on the back.

Great. So you've made up a clue card. What do you do with it now?

Well, there are several different ways you can use them:

1. Ask someone to test you. This is the most common way of using them. Ask a friend or a parent to ask you the questions and see how you do!
2. Lay out all your cluecards on the table, question side up. Look at them carefully.

Sort them into two piles; those that you **DO** know the answer to, and those that you **DON'T**. Check that you got the answers right to the questions you knew the answer to, and then go back over your notes for the questions you are not sure about. Again, this helps you to focus your revision on things you don't know!

3. The third way you can use them is to lay them all out **ANSWER** side up and try to guess the question!

Note Taking; the definitive guide...

Everyone can make notes, surely? It's not that difficult is it? You just find the information in your textbooks and copy it out, right?

Not quite!.....

Of course, your brain is probably quite happy for you to make notes this way, as it means that it doesn't really have to do much work and no thinking is involved. In fact, mid way through 'note-taking' your brain might even be able to squeeze in a bit of day dreaming!

This is where you need to get smart

and outwit your brain again!...

There is one golden rule to note-taking. Stick with it and you'll go far!...

NO COPYING!

If you have to think about what you're writing and are constantly re-phrasing the information in front of you, your brain is having to work! This can be quite tough sometimes, but 15 minutes note-taking using this method is far more effective than an hour copying straight out of your books!

There are of course other things you

should be doing when making notes.

Colour is important! Keywords should be in a different colour, and try to use pictures if you can to help you! If you have several bullet points about a particular topic, think about mind mapping them. Try to break up your notes so you don't just have a page of black and white writing in front of you!

The more colourful and original and interesting your notes are, the more you will learn!

Mnemonics...

What on earth are mnemonics?...I haven't got a clue!

WRONG! You have all come across mnemonics at some point and in science alone there are at least two you will remember!...

ROY G BIV or MRS GREN?

They are both examples of mnemonics! A mnemonic is a learning aid designed to help you remember infor-

mation. It can be a word or a sentence, it's up to you! Try to make it as silly as possible too as this makes it easier to remember!

ROY G BIV, of course, helps you to remember your colours of the spectrum and MRS GREN relates to the characteristics of living things. These are ones we all use but you can make up your own. Can you make up a silly word or phrase to help you

remember the Electromagnetic Spectrum? Or facts that you need to learn for history perhaps?



The Post-It note technique...

The key here is NOT to wallpaper the house with them!...Apart from the fact this might not go down too well with your parents, it's not really going to help you as it will overload your brain!

There are often a few random facts or important equations or quotes we all find difficult to learn, for no apparent reason.

This is where the Post-It note technique can help you. Write the information down on a Post-It note and stick it somewhere that you are going to look at it several times a day. This could be next to the light switch on your bedroom wall, it could be on your bedside table, it could even be on the back of the bathroom door! The more you look at it, the more likely your

brain is to remember it, and when you are sitting in the exam, you can shut your eyes and visualize the Post-It note!

