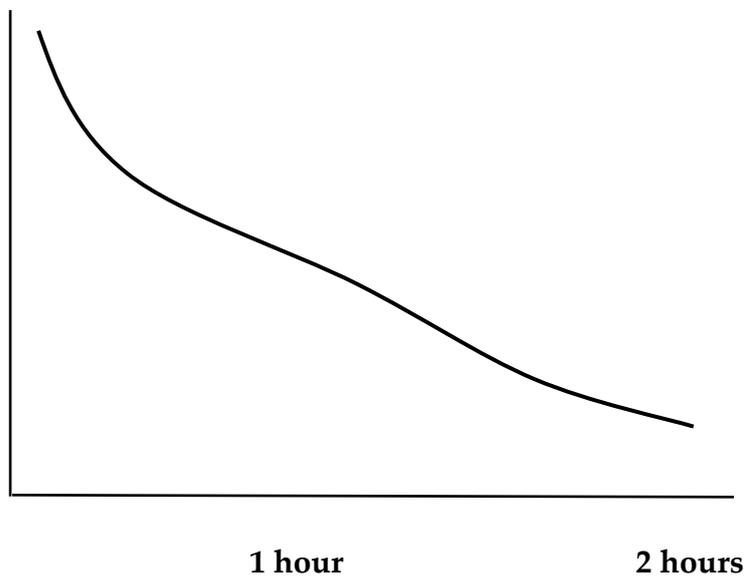


Planning your revision

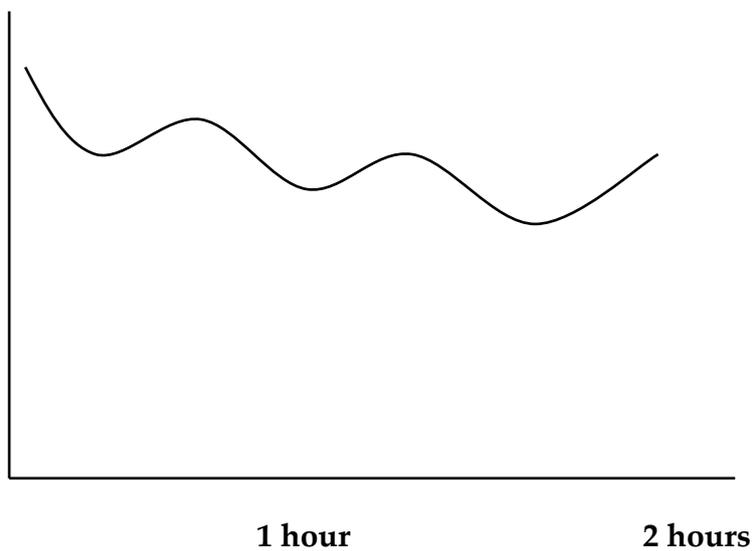
- Before you start your revision it is essential that you know what needs to be revised in each subject. Often your subject teacher will provide you with a check list or exam specification which makes it clear which topics will be on which exam paper.
- Make a list of topics for each subject, and use this as a check list.
- Make a revision timetable, so that you can ensure that you revise for all subjects and do not run out of time. Put the timetable up on the wall at home where everyone can see it. Ask your family to help you keep to it. At the back of this publication, there is an example of a revision timetable, as well as blank ones that you may find useful. You can download a colour version of this from the school website. Go to the school website: www.jhn.herts.sch.uk and click on the Years 7-11 tab, then Homework and Revision, then scroll down to Revision and click on 'Revision Planners'. Save the whole file onto your memory stick or hard drive. Look at how the model one has been used. Use the two 'blank' versions (one for normal term time and one for study leave and holiday time) to work out your own schedules.
- Try to keep to your revision timetable but if you fall behind don't worry, just continue from where you were supposed to be. Do not spend more time writing another timetable.
- Start your revision as early as possible
- Build up the amount of time you spend on revision – a few hours in the early weeks, increasing to several hours a day close to the exams

- Plan 2 hour revision sessions when possible (but don't use this as an excuse not to revise if you haven't got a 2 hour 'window' of time)
- Each revision session should be broken down into 25 minute mini-sessions with 5-10 minute breaks in between. This is because your learning efficiency drops as time goes on, but increases after a short break. You will therefore learn much more in four 25 minute mini-sessions than you will in one 2 hour marathon. This is illustrated on the graph on page 3. These 25 minute sessions are called 'Pomodoros'; look it up on Youtube.
- Plan to give yourself a 'reward' for doing a certain amount of revision. i.e watch your favourite television programme if you manage to revise for four sessions of 20-25 minutes with a five minute break in between each session. Do not allow yourself the 'reward' if you do not stick to your plan. Tell your family what your rewards are and ask them to help you keep to them.
- Try to build in regular reviews of work you have already revised. On page 4 there is a graph showing how the amount of information you can recall decreases over time. If you review the work you did straight after your 5-10 minute break, then again after one day, then again after one week, you will recall much more information for much longer.
- Don't listen to your favourite music while you revise. Studies show that this is unhelpful and will reduce effective revision. Background instrumental music is okay. Even better is the sort of background sound found on apps like Noisli and Nature Sounds.

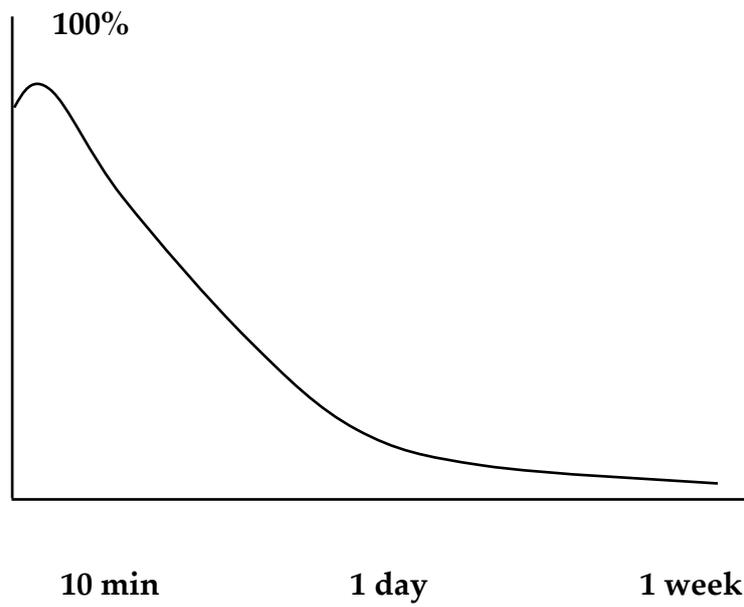
Learning Efficiency- without breaks



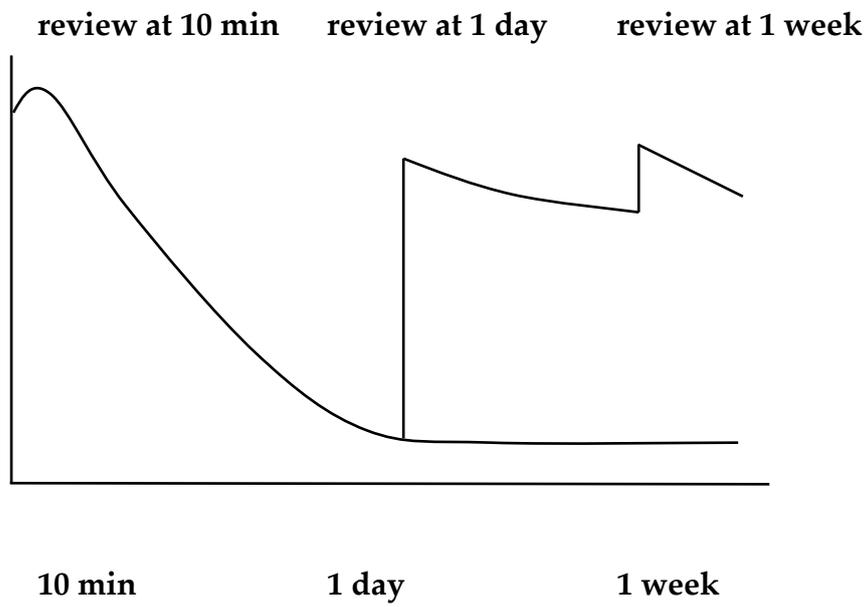
Learning Efficiency - with breaks



Recall



Recall & Review



Ideas for how to revise

- Write out definitions of key words. Put each key word on a card with its definition on the other side. Spread the cards out with key words face up. Start with the first one and try to remember its definition. Turn the card over to check if you're right. If you are, leave it turned over; if wrong, turn it back to the key word again. Move on to the next card and repeat. Go through all the cards in this way, and repeat until all the cards are turned over. Repeat each time you revise the topic. This can work for definitions, facts, physics equations, chemical reaction conditions etc.
- Condense and re-condense your notes. In revision notes you are picking out the most important points and trying to reduce the amount of information to a more manageable amount.
- Make sure your notes are well spaced out – don't cram too much on a page.
- Make revision cards on a topic – use them on the bus etc. Revision cards should have the subject on, and a title, as well as the basic notes. Keep sets of cards together with string or elastic bands threaded through a hole in the top left hand corner. You can also use revision card apps, such as Memrise, Anki, and Quizlet.
- Use colour, boxes, circles, underlining, and abbreviations.
- Use revision guides, but not as a substitute for writing your own revision notes.
- Create a mind map on a topic – by hand or on a website such as BBC Bitesize – this is one way of making notes.

- When going through your revision notes, read them, put them face down, then write out (or redraw in the case of a mind/revision map) what you can remember. Compare what you have written down/drawn to the original notes. Check for what you have missed out.
- Use mnemonics
- Study buddies – agree on a topic, take turns to say what you can remember with someone acting as scribe
- Pretend to teach someone else – even if it's the cat or your own reflection!
- Use revision apps such as Gojimo, but many exist.
- Use revision websites like www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize, and www.getrevising.co.uk. Youtube also has some excellent material. Try myGCSEscience for example.
- Do as many past paper questions as you can. Make sure you sometimes do these under timed conditions.
- Get anyone who's willing to test you – mum, dad, granny, whoever.
- Write key points on 'post-it' notes and stick them to things around the house.
- Write giant-size notes on large sheets of paper or strips of leftover wallpaper and stick them up in your bedroom.
- Annotation - take a blank copy of a poem and annotate it again as a way of testing your knowledge and understanding. Refine your annotations. Are they

brief and useful? Remember that annotations should not be translations of meaning but comments on ideas or effects, and that they can be pictures and images as well as words.

- Plan answers to essay questions. What are your key points and which quotations will you use?
- Essay writing - Write all or parts of practice essays (sometimes under timed conditions). Re-write essays you wrote in class, acting on the teacher's advice and subsequent revision in order to improve. Write the plans for essays you have already written. Write the introduction and conclusion of an essay. Assess your writing using the marking criteria.

VAK characteristics: are you a V, an A or a K?

Visual learner

- You use your body to explain things.
- You learn from videos and coloured charts/diagrams.
- You like lively and colourful books.
- You use visual note-taking methods; charts, diagrams, mind maps, collages.
- You can learn key word and facts by displaying them around the room.

Auditory learner

- You like to work with someone and you like group discussions.
- You like guest speakers and mini-debates.
- You easily learn raps, rhymes, chants and verse.
- You like the spoken word, sound-bites and catch-phrases.
- You remember things well using mnemonics.
- You use music to relax and energise you. It helps you visualise things.

Kinaesthetic learner

- You are good at mime.
- You use gesture and movements to explain or help you understand things.
- You like to design and build things.
- You learn a lot from field trips or visits.
- You learn best by physically doing something e.g. drawing out a large version of a map would help you remember it.

Activities and their success levels in terms of average retention rates.

- Listening to a lecture 5%
- Reading 10%
- Audio-visual 20%
- Demonstration 30%
- Discussion Group 50%
- Practise by doing 75%
- Teach others/immediate use of learning 100%

National Training Laboratories USA

LAST MINUTE PREPARATION

The evening before the examination

- Check all equipment/supplies
- Finish intense work by 8 p.m.
- Exercise – work off stress (run, walk, swim, vigorous exercise)
- Sleep (you need eight hours)

The morning of the examination

- Get up early – allow yourself time to do all the things you need to without rushing yourself.
- Run/swim/stretch/exercise/freshen up!
- Review all topics.
- Focus on a positive state of mind.
- Collect your thoughts.
- Breakfast – it's very important to make sure your body and brain have fuel.

YOUR ESSENTIAL EXAMINATION KIT

Feeding your brain

For breakfast, have some cereal and fruit juice, and for lunch salads, fish and pasta are good. Take some water in a small plastic bottle into the examination with you.

Equipment

Check you have enough pens, pencils, colours, rubber, ruler. Also – Maths equipment, calculator, any texts you're allowed, dictionary and so on. Make sure your watch works and is accurate. Keep an eye on the examination hall clock and synchronise your watch with it.

Brain exercises

- Juggling or doodling with both hands will link both brain hemispheres and increase your concentration before you start the examination.
- There are neurovascular points on your head; on your forehead, behind your ears and around your temples which, when rubbed, will allow greater focus and concentration.
- Stretch, as if warming up for sport and gently roll your neck from side to side – not all the way around, as this can stretch it too much.
- Take a look at this website – www.braingym.org

COPING WITH STRESS

There is no doubt that any form of worry, anxiety or stress will block your learning channel and dramatically influence your ability to revise. Your subconscious mind is reacting to “outside” pressures.

Stress is a build up of tension, anxiety and strain. Everyone experiences stress and some can cope with stress easier than others but failing to cope is not a sign of weakness. You can train yourself to be better at controlling stress.

There are a number of ways to help cope with stress

- Constructive self-talk.
- Increase oxygen input - deep breathing. Specifically, breathe in for a slow count of 7, then out for a slow count of 11. If you can't manage that at first, try in for 3 and out for 5, then go up to 5 and 9 and so on. This helps to get rid of the excess adrenaline that gets in the way of being able to think clearly.
- Plan and organise daily routine, mid-term targets. Use a diary and have an overview.
- Exercise, diet, sleep patterns should be balanced with your work pressure.
- Predict the tough times; focus on your long-term goals.
- Listen to relaxing music.
- Give yourself credit when you are doing it right.
- Build in rewards – and intend to enjoy them.
- Seek help – supportive people are vital, reassuring and great for confidence.
- Know how to say “no” to those who distract or interrupt you.
- Smile and find people who make you laugh.

Mental preparation before the day of the examination

- Smile!
- Think yourself in the examination...ask typical questions: “How would I answer...?”
- Think of your past successes.
- Remember you know **much more** than you think you do.
- **Relax** and let the knowledge flow.
- Reaffirm venue and time of examinations.

THE EXAMINATION

Tips and Techniques

Set off for the examination after you've spent some time on mental preparation; get into the right frame of mind to tackle the work ahead.

Enter the examination room

- Set out your equipment.
- Focus on the future – what has motivated you all along?
- Relax and focus on the questions and topics you've practised.
- Try some brain exercises.
- Drink a little water.
- Calm down...a few deep breaths. Specifically, breathe in for a slow count of 7, then out for a slow count of 11. If you can't manage that at first, try in for 3 and out for 5, then go up to 5 and 9 and so on. This helps to get rid of the excess adrenaline that gets in the way of being able to think clearly.
- Be confident, think positively – believe in yourself.
- If in doubt about anything, ask the invigilator.

Follow instructions

- Listen to the invigilator. (There can be change to instructions.)
- Read written instructions carefully, they will tell you: time; choice of questions; type of answer; number of marks.
- Fill in Examination Centre details and your name.
- Read all the questions. If you don't have to do all the questions, eliminate those you don't want to do. Choose very carefully because each question deserves time – you may suddenly realise you **can** do it after all.
- Think about a general plan for the examination.
- Follow all instructions to the letter.

Planning your time

Read the question – two to three times...slowly.

REMEMBER HOW YOU'VE BEEN ADVISED TO PLAN THE EXAMINATION

- Reading time
- Planning time
- Time for each answer
- Checking time

What happens if you don't plan your time?

- You rush answers and panic.
- You leave answers or miss obvious questions.
- Your memory doesn't react – so you begin to feel worried.

What happens if you fall behind in your plan?

- Don't panic: reduce each answer time – you **can** do it!
- Go into note form if absolutely necessary.
- Try to finish **each** question – show your working out if you have to.

What happens if your mind goes blank?

Panic and anxiety only lessens your chances of choosing the right question/point, so focus on being calmer and try to clear your head.

- Relaxation techniques do help.
- Massage your forehead.
- Focus your breathing: deep breaths.
- Don't spend too long trying to remember a point – leave a space or a line. Come back to it later.
- Keep writing. Jot any ideas or thoughts on rough paper.
- Ask yourself questions, then try again.

What should you do in between examinations, if you have two on the same day

- Get some fresh air – and move around.
- A possible plan is:
 - Lunch – 20 minutes.
 - Switch off – 15 minutes.
 - Focused review for 30 minutes.
- Relax. Remember...**you can cope.**
- Treat the afternoon as a “new day”.

WHAT IS A “GOOD ANSWER”?

A GOOD ANSWER...comes from a well-revised topic

Is the result of a well-understood question

Is often anticipated in revision

Is planned carefully

Is relevant – and answers the question

Is clearly written and makes sense

Is presented well

Is produced in the way you’ve been taught

Is concluded and is checked

Pleases you!