

This booklet is aimed at supporting **both** parents and students through the process of completing GCSE examinations.

GCSE Exam Preparation Booklet



The
Appleton
School



A successful year and good exam results

Good exam results are not based on what happens on the day of the exam. Many feelings will go through the minds of the students and yourselves alike. Are they in the right frame of mind? Will they remember what they have revised? Will they get the right questions?

The results of your child's exams are generally determined before they sit the final exam. There are three broad stages in the process of achieving good exam results. Exam success is about:

STAGE 1: Learning the subject content first time round

- The process of revision (looking at something again) makes the assumption that the learning of each subject has taken place already - **every lesson does count!**
- Go see a teacher if you are about something sooner rather than later, do not leave it to the last minute.

STAGE 2: Revision

- Even a student who has attended every lesson of the course and paid attention, needs to revise to achieve their full potential. Everyone needs to complete revision using techniques that are effective for them.

STAGE 3: The Exam

- Even if a student has learnt the subject content and revised thoroughly things can still go wrong on the day of the exam. There are several skills that need to be used during the exam:
 - Knowing the subject matter
 - Organisational skills
 - Exam technique
 - Time management



Staying well during revision and exams



1. Always take a moment just to breathe, whether in the exam, before or after.
2. Remember that school does offer support, just reach out and ask!
3. Keep your work balanced. Spend time revising, but socialise and relax too.
4. Keep a self-care routine so that your revision is the most productive it can be whilst you feel as good as possible.
5. Break up revision with food and exercise to make sure you stay energised.
6. Remember that results do not define you.
7. Find a revision space and style that works for you: silence, background chatter, music with or without lyrics.
8. Work to your own pace – everyone is different in how they work.
9. If you feel nervous about the time pressure of an exam, practice timing yourself when you revise, or try some test papers.
10. Plan in some treats to reward yourself, and celebrate when it's all over!



A Parent/Carer's guide to surviving Year 11

How can you help now?

- ✓ Encourage your child to complete coursework on time
- ✓ Check s/he is doing her homework and sign planner
- ✓ Make sure s/he is at school every day and on time
- ✓ Ensure the balance of work and play is right
- ✓ If your child is struggling in any way- let us know right away.
- ✓ Encourage your child to attend all revision and study support sessions.

Revision

- ✓ Devise a revision timetable with your child
- ✓ Help keep his/her books and notes organised
- ✓ Ensure your child keeps revision sessions to no longer than half an hour or an hour at most, and then takes a short break before starting another subject
- ✓ Help your child to revise specific topics in each subject, not everything at once
- ✓ Ask your child to start each session by tackling the most difficult bits first
- ✓ Ensure they revisit each subject several times
- ✓ Encourage your child to use different revision methods such as mind maps, notes, pictures and spider diagrams
- ✓ Allow them to work with a friend on occasion to test each other and talk about the work
- ✓ Check your child is using revision guides from school or bookshops. Some are available online, such as BBC Bitesize at www.bbc.co.uk/education/revision

Please ensure that your child:

- ✓ Has somewhere to study
- ✓ Eats properly and drinks plenty of water
- ✓ Doesn't listen to television and loud music when revising
- ✓ Is supported by parents/carers who are positive and reassuring to build confidence
- ✓ Is not distracted by mobile phones, Instagram, SnapChat, Netflix etc.
- ✓ Build in short breaks to prevent overload, little and often is the key.



When the actual exams arrive

- ✓ Give your child time, space and peace while s/he works before and between exams
- ✓ Emphasise the need for plenty of sleep, especially the night before an exam
- ✓ Don't let him/her work themselves into a state of exhaustion - encourage them to take regular breaks
- ✓ Ask him/her to put their social life on hold

On the day of an exam

- ✓ Ensure s/he gets up on time and is in school at least 15 minutes before the exam is due to start
- ✓ Ask if s/he has everything they need
- ✓ Tell him/her to switch off their mobile phone and leave it off until after the exam, or better still, leave it at home
- ✓ Wish him/her good luck as they leave!



GOOD REVISERS

by @Inner_Drive
www.innerdrive.co.uk

POOR REVISERS

Eat breakfast



Skip breakfast

Sleep 8-10 hours a night



Get little sleep

**Have regular
bed times**



**Have inconsistent
bed times**

Get fresh air each day



Stay indoors all day

Exercise regularly



Do no exercise

Do past papers



**Mostly revise highlighting
"key" passages**

Spread out their revision



Cram their revision

**Keep a diary to capture
negative thoughts**



**Dwell on worst
case scenarios**

**Revise in a quiet
environment**



**Revise while listening
to music or TV**

Drink water regularly



Forget to stay hydrated

**Put their phone away
during revision**

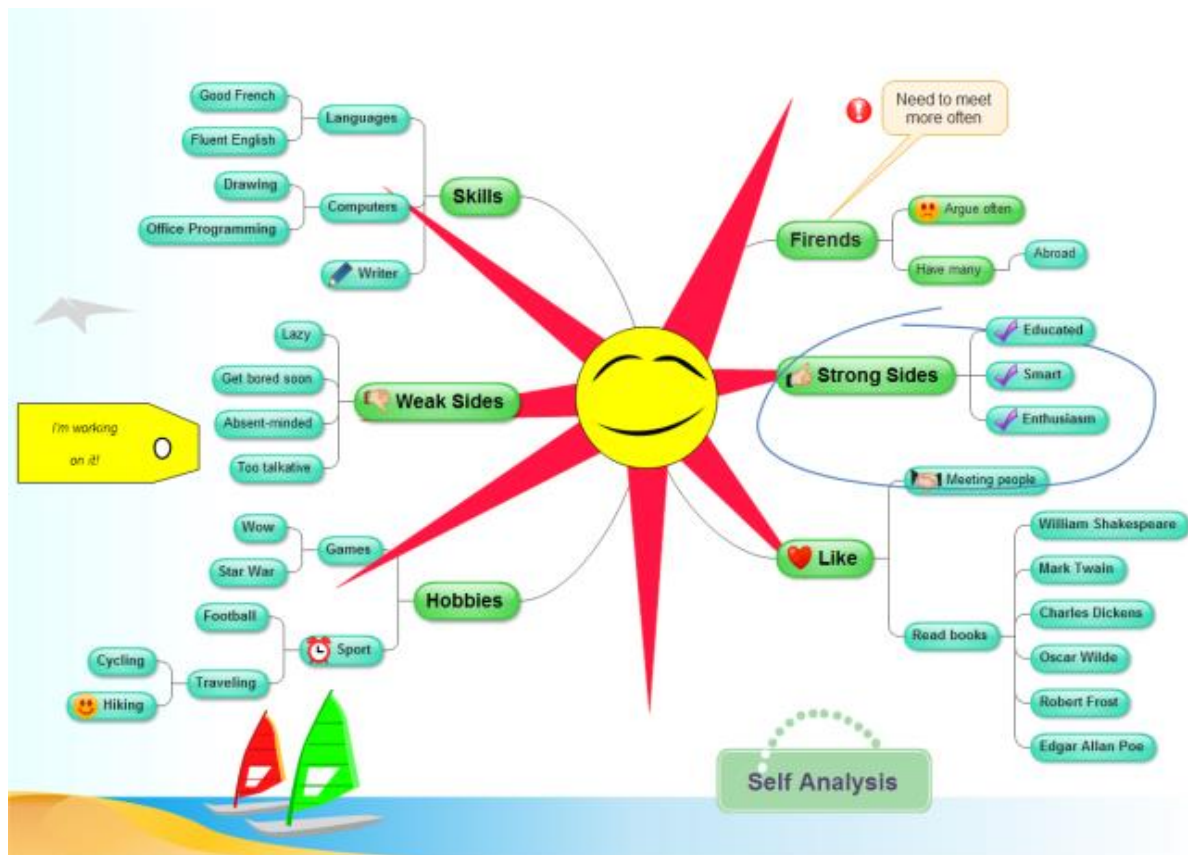


**Revise with their mobile
phone next to them**



Ideas to Support Revision:

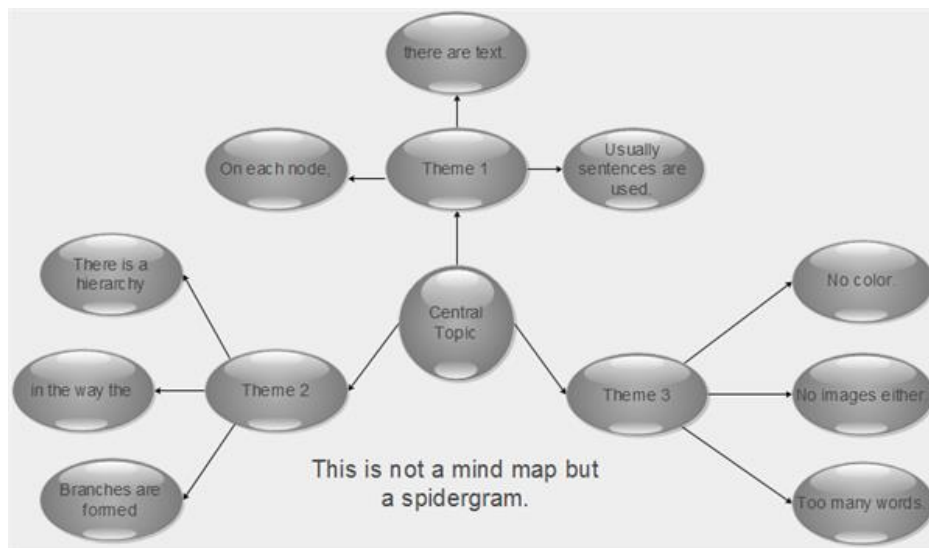
Mind Map - a mind map is to help you visualize, organize, and classify ideas, making them perfect for study aids.





Spidergram - a drawing that shows a summary of facts or ideas, with the main subject in a central circle and the most important facts on lines drawn out from it.

Here is a sample spidergram (or spider diagram):



Typically a Spidergram has:

- A central image (like a Mind Map)
- A hierarchical structure (so does Mind Mapping)
- Nodes branching each hierarchical line (Mind Maps have main branches and sub-branches)
- A lot of phrases and sentences (Mind Mapping in its purest form will focus on single keywords)

Spidergrams **RARELY**:

- use color
- use curved lines (other than round the central topic),
- make much use of images added to the diagram,
- have just one or two words entries (unlike a Buzan mind map),
- use bubbles or boxes around nodes (see bubble diagram).



How to read effectively

The strategy we are going to try is ABC. It is called ABC, because you don't want to note everything (the whole alphabet) you just want the summary hint (the ABC).

- A) Read the first sentence of the paragraph and stop to think: what do you expect to find out in this paragraph?**
- B) Now read the whole paragraph, one sentence at a time. Don't worry about words you don't understand. Try to 'guess' what the word might mean, within the whole sentence.**

For example, read this sentence: "At 9am the bell fjdsajfdlasjdksal and everyone went to assembly."

Obviously, fjdsajfdlasjdksal isn't really a word, but reading that whole sentence, what do you think

'fjdsajfdlasjdksal' means?

- C) At the end of the paragraph, write about 5-10 words to summarise the key point. You can summarise in single key words or in sentences.**

Example

Julius Caesar was born c.100BC in Rome. His family were noble but poor. We don't know much about Caesar's early life, except that his father died suddenly when Julius was 16, leaving him as head of the family.

Born 100BC. Poor but noble. Dad died when JC 16.

Caesar was an excellent soldier and soon became a General. He was appointed governor of Spain in 61BC, where he successfully crushed rebellions by the Spanish. The Romans were very proud of their army, so Caesar's military victories made him popular with Roman plebeians. Therefore, the following year, Caesar returned home to pursue a political career.

General in army. Governed Spain well. Returned home.

As part of his election campaign, Caesar spoke to the people about Rome's problems of high taxes, slave labour, unemployment and corruption in the Senate and promised to solve them. The people loved him and the

Promised people would solve problems. Senate afraid but Caesar



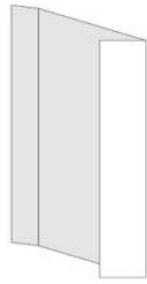
Senate became afraid that the people would elect Caesar as Consul. Rich senators began campaigning to turn the plebeians against Caesar. However, Caesar made a deal with two important patricians: Pompey and Crassus. Pompey was the most famous Roman General and was adored by the public. Caesar married his daughter, Julia, to Pompey, to gain Pompey's support. Crassus was extremely rich and, therefore, very influential. Crassus hated the Senate because it had given credit to Pompey for crushing Spartacus' slave rebellion, when it had actually been Crassus who led the army. Caesar's promises to curb the Senate were attractive to Crassus. Although Pompey and Crassus hated each other, they were both prepared to support Caesar in his election campaign. As a result, Caesar was elected Consul in 59BC.

*elected with help of
Pompey and
Crassus.*

This isn't the only way of summarising, it's just my example. You summarise in your own way. Pictures can work just as well as words, if you prefer. The important thing is not to spend ages - do it quickly!



The Origami Note-Taking System



Keywords



Notes



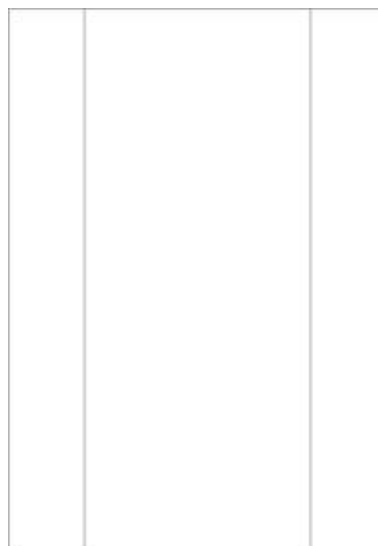
Review

How To Take Notes | The Origami Note-Taking System

Use this innovative note-taking technique that simultaneously facilitates understanding, increases readability and creates a framework for easy review. This simple design that not only helps you structure your notes, but transforms them into a powerful review and quizzing tool.

Step 1: Set Up The 3-Column Layout

Draw 2 vertical lines with a ratio of roughly 2-6-2, that is 20%-60%-20%, like so:



Step 2: Take Notes

Using this layout, your notes will be divided into 3 categories: keywords, notes and review.



- **Keywords** include names, titles, important dates, etc.
- **Notes** include explanations, formulas, elaboration, etc.
- **Reviews** includes questions, key points, unknown/missing pieces of information

Keywords go on the left, notes in the middle and review on the right.

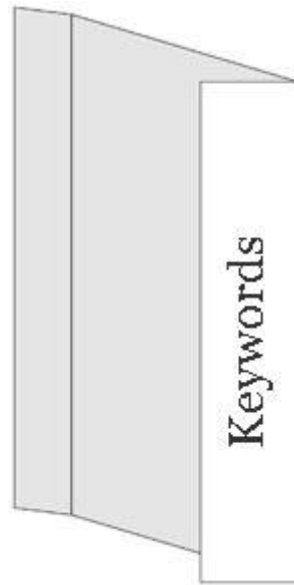
Keywords	Notes	Review
— 20% —	— 60% —	— 20% —

For example, if you need to take notes about "shibas", a type of dog breed, it might look like this:

Keyword	Notes	Review
Shiba	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The smallest of the six original and distinct spitz breeds of dog• From Japan.• A small, agile dog that copes very well with mountainous terrain.• Originally bred for hunting.• One of the few ancient dog breeds still in existence in the world today.	What are the ancient dog breeds?

Step 3: Review

The genius of this template is that your notes will be pre-made for reviewing and self-quizzing. All you have to do is fold the paper along the vertical lines!



Quiz from keywords by folding the keywords column over and testing your memory of the notes and review.



Quiz from notes by folding both side columns under and testing your memory of the keyword and review.

Quiz from review by folding the review column under and testing your memory of the notes and keywords.



Use Abbreviations

Fast note-takers use a wide range of abbreviations that extend beyond the commonly known ones. They may even develop personalized abbreviations specific to their area of study or expertise.

It will take a bit of work to start integrating abbreviations into your note-taking style, but after a short while they will become second nature. Start with the most common and useful ones, then keep adding more into your vocabulary. To get started, here's a list of some of the most frequently used abbreviations.

Abbreviation	Meaning	Abbreviation	Meaning
eg	for example	Q	question
ex	example	A	answer
ie	in other words	pg	page
etc	and so forth (et cetera)	tho	though
vs	compared to, against, versus	thru	through
~	approximately/around	v	very
?	questions, what?	st	something
-	minus, less	so	someone
+	plus, and	sb	somebody
=	equal to	sw	somewhere
≠	not equal to	sh	somehow
#	number	w	with
excl	excluding	wo	without
imp	important/importance	wi	within
incl	including	b4	before
info	information	bc	because
max	maximum	esp	especially
min	minimum	tf	therefore
*	important	**	very important