

# INDEPENDENT STUDY

BOOKLET



NOTE TAKING



REVISION



PRODUCTIVITY



WELLBEING

## PREVIEW

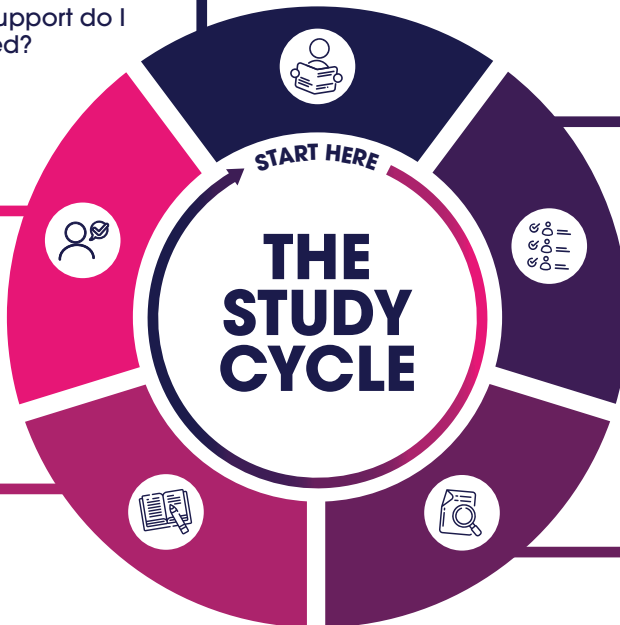
- Pre-read your notes
- Do pre-lesson tasks
- Note key ideas and concepts

## ATTEND

- Be present
- Be attentive
- Ask lots of questions

## CHECK

- Are my study methods effective?
- What support do I still need?



# THE STUDY CYCLE

START HERE

## STUDY

- Schedule independent study sessions
- Study in 20 - 30 minute chunks

## REVIEW

- Consolidate notes and fill in any gaps
- Create connection with other topics
- Highlight area to study

# FRANKLIN COLLEGE STUDY CYCLE

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## STEP 1: PREVIEW



Look at what you'll be covering before you begin lessons. This will help you gain a sense of the big picture. You will get more out of lessons if you already have some context for what you're about to learn, and you can come into lessons with questions.

## STEP 2: ATTEND LESSONS



Going to lessons is an important step in the study cycle, but just being physically present isn't enough. Be attentive and engaged. Lesson time is important, because this is when you get an understanding of the teacher's expectations and areas of focus, which will help you figure out what to focus on during your study sessions later (steps 3 and 4). Gain insight and intuition from your teacher and from other students in your class through asking questions and taking part in discussions.

During lessons, take notes in a way that will be useful to you. Try to stay off your devices during lesson, unless you need it for an assignment.

## STEP 3: REVIEW



Take some time after lessons to go back over your notes. By reviewing soon after lessons, while the material is still fresh, you can fill in gaps and figure out what you might need help with. When doing this, make sure you're actively engaging with the material. Passively letting your eyes scan over the material won't help much.

Instead, explain the material to yourself, summarise the key points, ask questions, and think about the big picture. Start to plan how you might want to study the material you learned. Repeated exposure to the material helps you remember and understand it more effectively.

## STEP 4: STUDY AND COMPLETE ASSIGNMENTS



Set up a daily schedule to work or review your material. Brief but intense study sessions tend to be more effective than trying to study for many hours at a time. Figure out how long you can stay focused and efficient and then plan study sessions of this length every day. By spreading your studying over time, you're studying much more effectively (this is called "distributed practice"). Try to do less-effective marathon study or work sessions before the exam or assignment is due. (also known as "massed practice")..



## STEP 5: CHECK



It's important to check in with yourself to make sure what you're doing is working and being open to changing your techniques if it's not. After all, you wouldn't want to spend a lot of time doing something that is not helping you learn. Take a step back on a regular basis and ask yourself:

- Does this answer make sense given the information provided?
- What strategy did I use to solve this problem that was helpful?
- How does this information conflict with my prior understanding?
- How does this information relate to what we learned last week?
- What questions will I ask myself next time I'm working on these types of problems?
- What is confusing about this topic?
- What are the relationships between these two concepts?
- What conclusions can I make? Practice self-testing on a regular basis. Discuss what you're learning with classmates. Check in with the learning objectives and make sure you are meeting them.

## Focused Study Session Example

### PLAN

(Suggested time: 1 - 2 minutes)

Decide what you will accomplish in your study session and get started

### STUDY

(Suggested time: 30 - 50 minutes)

Interact with material: organise, concept map, summarise, process, read, work problems

### BREAK

(Suggested time: 5 - 10 minutes)

Step away from material to clear your head

### RECAP

(Suggested time: 5 minutes)

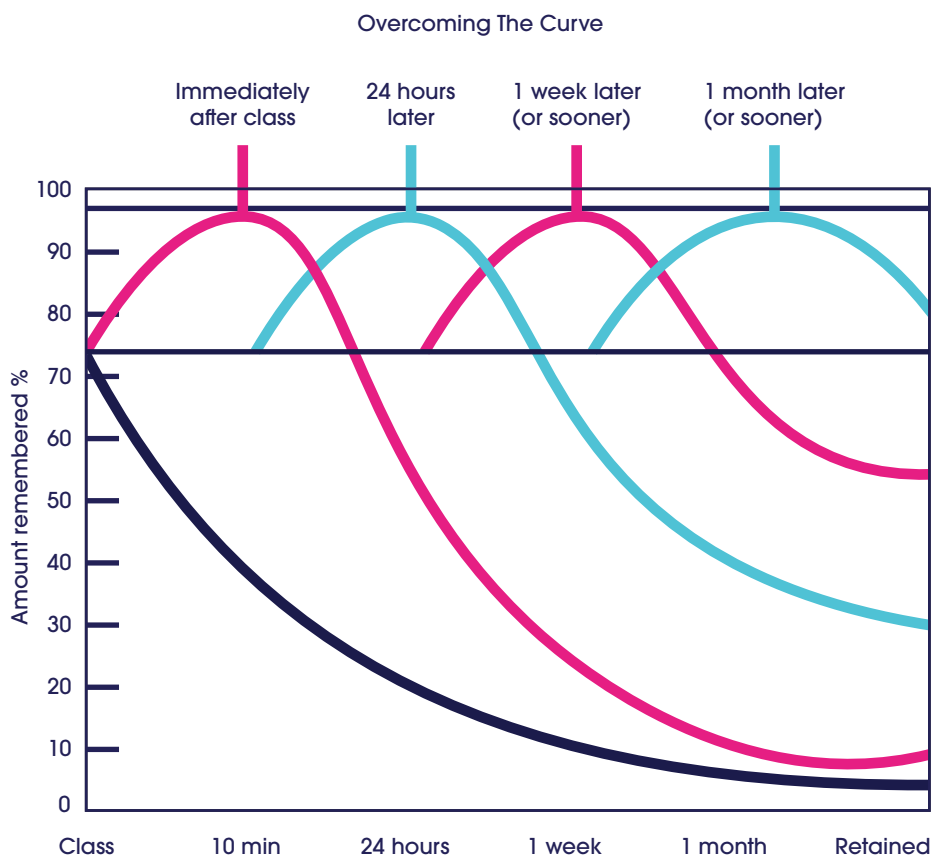
Go back over, summarise, wrap-up and check what you studied

### CHOOSE

Should I continue studying?  
Should I take a break?  
Should I change tasks or subject?

# WEEKLY & MONTHLY REVIEW

Our memory naturally forgets information so regularly reviewing lesson content over a monthly cycle will help you to retain the information in your long-term memory. Forgetting information is part of the learning process.



## WEEKLY REVIEW EXAMPLE

1. Set aside an hour a week. No distractions!
2. Split up the hour evenly. 20 minutes per subject
3. For 20 minutes, review the week's work in that subject by:
  - Checking your notes are clear, legible and in order.
  - Summarise the learning in a quick diagram, mind-map or a few lines of notes.
  - Highlight material you found hard during the week. This is the material you need to work on during your study periods.
  - Go through your independent study and deadlines. Make a prioritised list for the week.

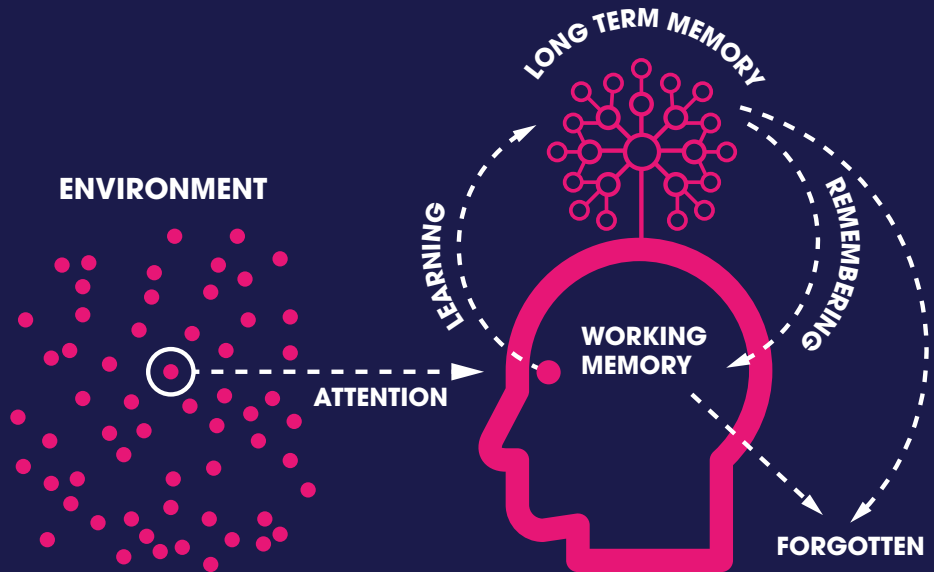
Repeat the above for all subjects

## MONTHLY REVIEW EXAMPLE

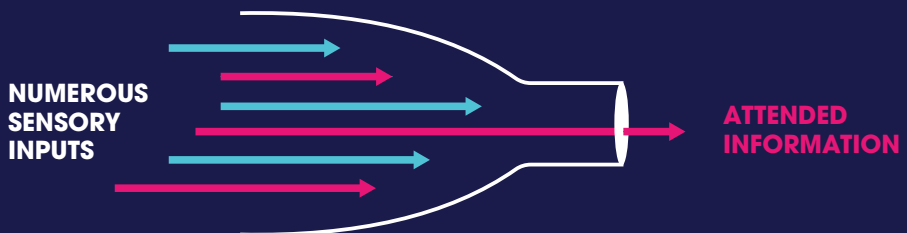
1. Set aside an hour per subject every 4 weeks
2. Split up the hour evenly. 20-minutes slots by doing the following:
  - Make a list of the topics you have studied over the past few weeks.
  - Rank them in order of confidence.
  - Complete a 'blurt' on the topic you are least confident with.
  - Use notes/textbook/class resources to fill in any gaps in knowledge and highlight these.
  - Generate a revision resource, create a quiz, tackle an exam question.

# HOW THE BRAIN WORKS

Revising can be hard, especially if you think about it the wrong way. The difficulty is getting information out of your brain and recalling it accurately. Before we look at some revision strategies it is important to understand how the brain (and memory) works.



Your brain receives lots of information from the environment. Some information is important and relevant, and we need to focus on, other information is irrelevant and needs to be ignored. Our ability to take in lots of information is limited so it is important that we do not overload this process. A good analogy is a bottleneck:





# WORKING MEMORY

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This processes the incoming information but its capacity to hold information is limited and will become full very quickly if you ask it to do too much. You need to be able to move information from your working memory to your long-term memory so you can retrieve and use it later. This can be achieved by spaced repetition and rehearsal of the new information.

We also need to be able to recall information from the long-term memory back to the working memory before we can use it. Pulling the information from the long to the working memory is difficult unless you have the right techniques to revise from.



Memory is like a wardrobe. A wardrobe can become disorganised and untidy as you add more to it.

Each time you return to your wardrobe, you can tidy it a bit, making it easier to find what you are looking for.

Each time you recall something from your memory, you make it easier to find that information in the brain.

# DIRECTED INDEPENDENT STUDY TO INDEPENDENT LEARNING

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Your teachers will set you independent study and include the following elements:

CONSOLIDATION OF  
CURRENT LEARNING

PREVIEW OF  
FUTURE LEARNING

REVIEW OR RETRIEVAL  
OF PRIOR LEARNING

The guide below shows you the advised study time outside of lessons for each subject to ensure success at the end of your course. This should build gradually and will become increasingly independent as you progress.

<b>INDEPENDENT STUDY</b>	<b>YEAR 1</b> Hours per subject or teacher per week	<b>YEAR 2</b> Hours per subject or teacher per week	<b>YEAR 3</b> Hours per subject or teacher per week
1st Half Term	2 Hours	4.5 Hours	1 Hour
October half term break and reading week			
2nd Half Term	3 Hours	4.5 Hours	1.5 Hours
Christmas Holidays			
3rd Half Term	4 Hours	4.5 Hours	2 Hours
February Half Term			
4th Half Term	4.5 Hours	4.5 Hours	2.5 Hours
Easter Holidays			
5th Half Term	4.5 Hours	4.5 Hours	3 Hours
May Half Term Break			
6th Half Term	4.5 Hours	Exams	3 Hours

# USING FLASHCARDS TO LEARN NEW VOCABULARY

ALL FLASH  
CARDS START  
IN BOX 1



CORRECTLY ANSWERED  
FLASHCARDS MOVE TO  
THE NEXT BOX

INCORRECTLY ANSWERED  
FLASHCARDS MOVE TO  
THE PREVIOUS BOX



# USING ACTIVE READING STRATEGIES

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## READING FOR MEANING



- Think hard about the ideas being discussed
- Get totally absorbed
- Do anything possible to get engaged, fascinated or involved with the material
- Use vivid imagination
- Generate images or imagine performing the actions

## PREVIEW & QUESTION



- Scan through the titles, headings and sub-headings
- Make an outline using the headings and sub-headings
- Read any overviews or summaries
- Look at diagrams, graphs or tables
- Attempt any preview questions

## READ



- Read each paragraph slowly
- Digest every word. Look up their meanings
- List and define the key words
- Identify the main idea in each paragraph
- Write it down in your own words on your outline of headings/sub-headings
- Look for evidence to support the main idea

## REFLECT (INTERPRETATION)



- In your own words, explain how and why concepts work
- Provide evidence to justify your ideas
- Think of your own concrete examples
- Highlight the similarities and differences between concepts
- Create analogies and explain their limitations
- Represent concepts in a new way or from a different point of view
- Transform text into a diagram, graph or table
- Reduce concepts down to their simplest form
- Ask: Do I understand the material
- Ask: How does it fit in with what I already know?
- Ask: Could I explain the material to a 12-year-old?

## REFLECT (INTERPRETATION)

- Relate concepts to other ideas, topics and classes
- Explain the relationship between concepts
- Create a concept map to show how things connect to each other
- Construct meaning from a variety of sources
- Apply knowledge to different situations
- Relate ideas to your own life experiences/memories
- Predict future outcomes
- Contextualise your knowledge
- Ask: what is the significance of these facts and ideas?
- Ask: what principle or principles are they based on?
- Ask: What else could they be applied to?
- Ask: From these facts and ideas, what else can I learn?

## RECALL, REVIEW, REPEAT



- Take a break to clear your working memory
- Recall from memory what you have read
- Review your notes to check your answers
- Restudy questions you didn't get right
- Repeat the process on another chapter



# SPELLING, PUNCTUATION AND GRAMMAR

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**Use this SPAG check to proof read your work for accuracy before submitting:**

Spelling is correct	
Homophones are used correctly	
Capital letters are used correctly	
Commas are used correctly	
Semi colons and colons are used correctly	
Connectives like and/but/because avoided at the start of sentences	
Prepositions are used correctly	
Articles are used correctly	
Incomplete sentences are avoided	
Subject-verb agreement is used correctly	
All missing word errors are identified	



# SPAG

# MARKING CODE

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Spelling, punctuation and grammar. Your teachers will use this, and you might use it to peer assess writing accuracy.

//

Start a new paragraph

^

Add missing words

**underline  
with ?**

Meaning is unclear

- Rewrite paragraph

**sp**

Incorrect spelling

- correction needed

**p**

Inaccurate

- missing punctuation

**g**

Inaccurate grammar

**v**

Vocabulary

- choose a better word

**con**

Add connectives to link ideas

**cap**

Add capital letters

# THE IMPORTANCE OF NOTE TAKING

Spelling, punctuation and grammar. Your teachers will use this, and you might use it to peer assess writing accuracy.

# DIGITAL VS Handwritten

- Research shows that writing by hand improves retention later.
- Students who type tend to type exactly what they are being taught.
- Students who handwrite tend to summarise the lesson content, they engage with the content more, utilising more cognitive processing.

# REWRITING YOUR NOTES

There may be weeks or months between your notes being taken and you will need to understand and remember what you first wrote.

Think how many subjects you study for which you have notes in some form



# THE CORNELL METHOD

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Cornell note-taking is a popular note-taking method for taking, organising, and summarising notes. This method typically results in better overall comprehension.

The page is divided into 4 (sometimes 3) different sections:

- One block for the Title
- Two columns for Key Words & Main Notes
- One block for the Summary



# WHAT MAKES CORNELL NOTE-TAKING SO EFFECTIVE?

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- **ACTIVE SUMMARISING**

To summarise a topic, you need to have a certain level of understanding. This note-taking method prompts you to get there.

- **INTENTIONAL NOTE TAKING**

Cornell notes encourage mindfulness and focus when taking notes. You must pull out key points and reflect on the material, instead of simply writing every little thing down.

- **REVISION-READY NOTES**

When it comes time to revisit your notes, they're logically laid out and help with the memory process.

## TIPS TO TAKE BETTER CORNELL NOTES

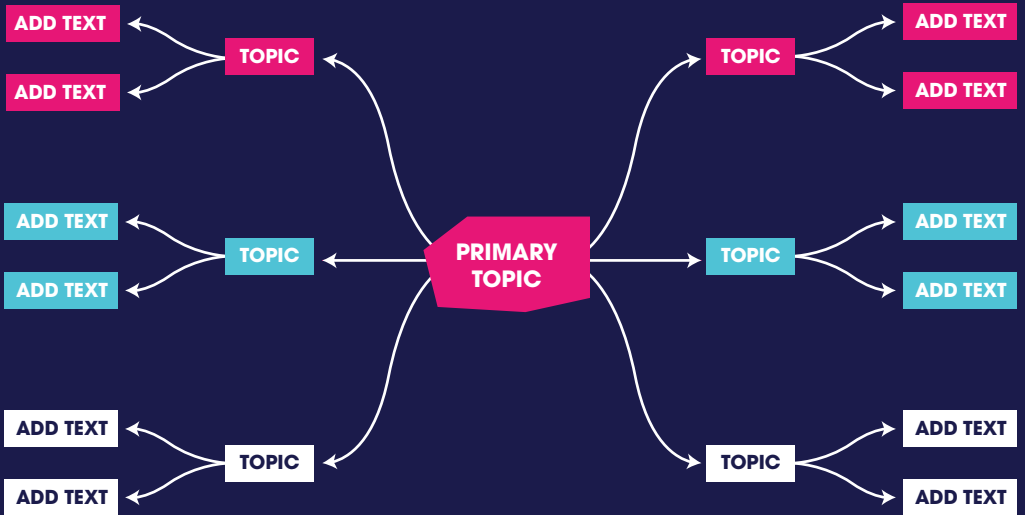
Cornell notes are written to be easy to review. So, make sure to review them!

Use the left column to write questions that you can use to quiz yourself on when revising.

Sometimes you may reach the end of a piece of paper, before you're actually finished taking your notes. Even if the notes aren't complete, don't forget the summary. Write the summary based on the existing points on the page.

# MIND MAPPING

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## TOP TIPS FOR MIND MAPPING

- It works far better on paper e.g blank A3 Sheets to space out your thoughts.
- Start in the centre of the page with a key theme or topic and circle it
- Make subheadings that underpin and relate to the main topic
- Each subheading will have key ideas linked to it.
- Make sure your ideas are visually distinct from your subheadings.
- Use the edge of the mind map to create questions related to the mind map.
- Don't write too much just key points/words
- Use images/diagrams

## WHAT MAKES MIND MAPPING EFFECTIVE?

- It helps to organise your messy thinking into a neat format.
- It helps you to see the whole topic on one page.
- It helps you to make links between ideas/developing your schema.

# THE LINEAR OUTLINING METHOD

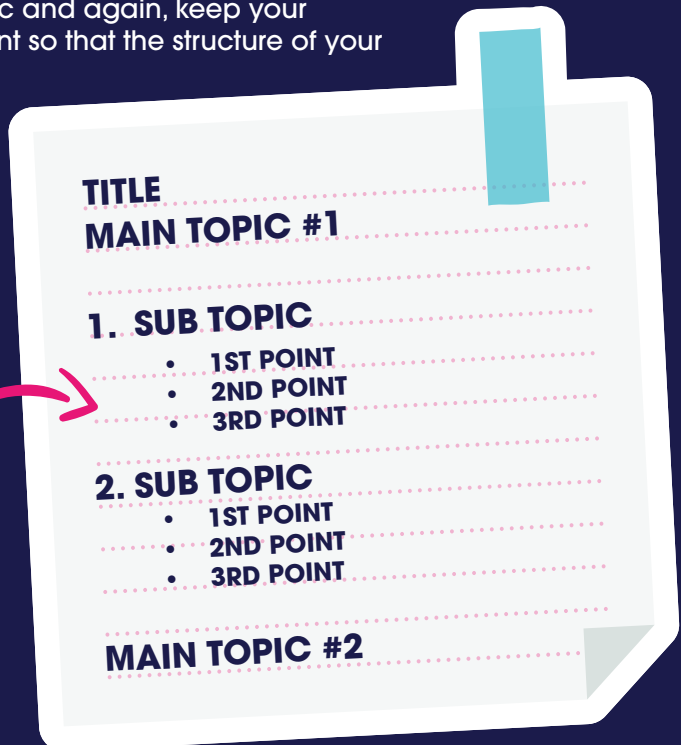
This method uses indentations which makes it easy to establish relationships between topics.

## HOW DO YOU DO LINEAR

- Determine the main topic of your notes and number it clearly.
- Write in capital letters
- If working digitally use bold or increase font size
- New topics can be added: use your numbering system and indent correctly.
- Add a subtopic for each section of your main notes
- Number or letter your subtopics-just be consistent.
- Indent each subtopic and again, keep your indentation consistent so that the structure of your notes is clear.

Notes are concise points relating to each subtopic.

These are indented so that they are distinct from your main topics



# WHAT MAKES IT EFFECTIVE?

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It's great for those who are disorganised and have notes that are messy



It prioritises information using headings and bullet points



Can be good written or digital note taking



# THE BLURTING REVISION METHOD

Blurting is an active recall technique that is often used as part of the exam revision process. Blurting is often also referred to as a memory dump. Blurting is a great way to prepare for exams because it can be done in a relatively short period of time, it clearly demonstrates which areas you should focus your additional revision on, and it puts key information in your short-term memory so that you can transfer this to your long-term memory.

*Title of Topic*

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*Everything you know*

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<i>What did you forget?</i>	<i>Questions</i>
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## HOW TO USE THE BLURTING METHOD

1

Choose a topic you have studied in the last 6 weeks

2

Write down all you can remember about that topic in the top section

3

Go to a **RELIABLE SOURCE OF INFORMATION** on this topic eg. Accurate class notes, text books etc...

4

Add in information in the bottom left you forgot

5

Produce questions that will test your knowledge on the information you forgot



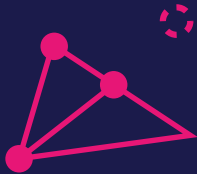
# RETRIEVAL PRACTICE

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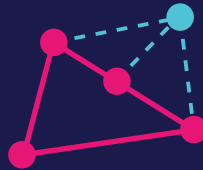
An important part of revision that helps you get information from your long-term memory back into your working memory.

## THE BENEFITS OF RETRIEVAL PRACTICE

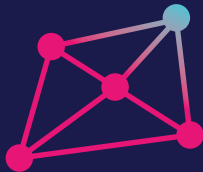
1. Identifies gaps in knowledge



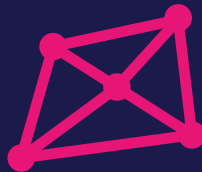
2. Makes connections



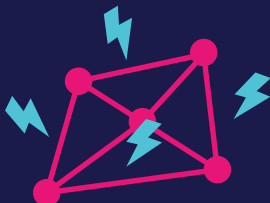
3. Checks for misunderstandings



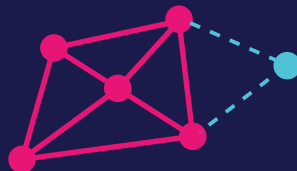
4. Strengthens connections



5. Makes connections robust under pressure and stress



6. Makes it easier to learn new things



## HOW



- Start by checking WHAT you need to revise-you should have complete and thorough lesson notes to refer to for this purpose.
- Ask your teacher for a scheme of work for the topics you are studying as a checklist.
- RAG (red, amber, green) all the topics that you need to know to give you a clear focus.

## AVOID



- Research suggests certain revision methods are not effective.
- Re-reading notes, re-writing notes and highlighting notes do not use ACTIVE recall or involve retrieval of information.
- Note taking is an important part of studying, but retrieval is much more effective as a revision strategy. This is because it is cognitively challenging, and your brain must work harder.

## STRATEGIES



- RAG (red/amber/green)
- Red-no understanding or recall of this topic
- Amber-some recall but could not explain the topic to others
- Green-confident in terms of recall and understanding
- Flashcards
- A good retrieval practice method

## TOP TIP

Instead of making notes you could create questions and turn them into a Quizizz, Quizlet or Kahoot



# INTERLEAVING

## WHAT IS IT?

This is the opposite to blocked practice.

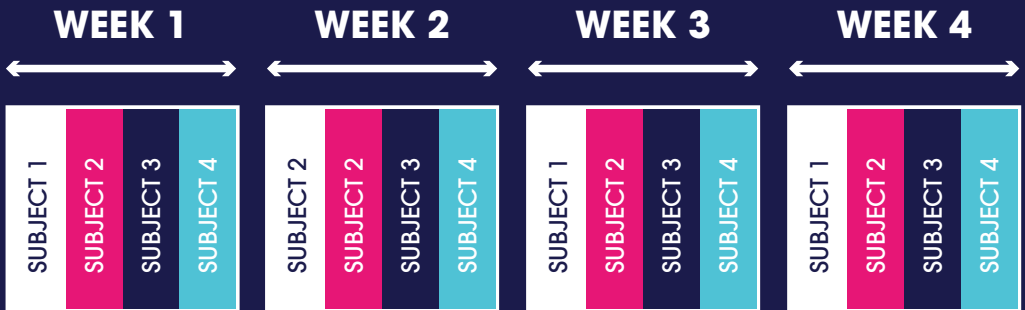
It involves breaking revision time into chunks and studying a different subject or topic in each chunk

This is instead of just focusing on one topic for the entire revision session.



### RESEARCH SHOWS

Interleaving improves long term retention rather than blocked practice.



Divide your subjects or topics into chunks across your revision period.

## ✓ BENEFITS

1. Enables you to see links, similarities and differences between different topics.
2. Interleaving is effective if it is used with similar topics
3. It is good with problem-solving topics
4. It is very much a long-term revision strategy

# GETTING THINGS DONE

## ORGANISATION AND STAYING ON TRACK

Sometimes study and revision can seem overwhelming, especially when you have a range of topics or subjects to cover.

It is important to find ways of managing your time effectively and of organising your tasks and your time.

There are many different task management and organisation systems and there is no 'perfect' solution.

### THE 5 PRINCIPLES OF GTD

#### CAPTURE

1

Write down any task as soon as you think of it or given it. Do this in a planner, digitally or note-book it doesn't matter.

#### ORGANISE

3

This is where you start to put your tasks onto lists or categories-for example, each subject you study may be a different list. Also add due dates and priorities.

#### REFLECT

4

Check back to review your progress on the tasks you have set. You should try this daily.

#### CLARIFY

2

Make sure you know what type of task it is-for example homework or coursework.

Does it need to be broken down into more steps? (a larger assignment or project certainly will).

If it is a task that can be done in 2 minutes or less-do it straight away

#### ENGAGE

5

Start work! You should base this on the priorities of the tasks you have set, the time you have available, the energy you have, and the context. Context means, for example, that if you are in a computer room in college, do a coursework task.

# THE POMODORO EFFECT

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A simple time management and productivity technique that involves breaking down larger tasks into smaller tasks. It trains the brain to focus for short periods. Over time it can build your attention span and concentration.

1



Decide of the task that you need to do

3



Work on the task until the timer rings

5



After 4 cycles, take a 15-30 minutes break

2



Set the timer to 25 minutes

4



Take a short 5 minute break



# TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

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Nothing is more important than your health and well-being. It is particularly important during test and exam periods when you may be experiencing anxiety. You will not perform well unless you are looking after yourself.



## PLANNING

Make sure you know when your exam is and then work back from that date to ensure you have given enough time to revise and learn the material well.

Balance your time between college independent study tasks, enrichment, personal professional development, socialising and relaxing.



## SLEEP

Anxiety around exam time is normal but staying up late is not a good idea. Going without sleep can have a negative effect on concentration, mood and memory. Aim for 8-9 hours per night.



## HYDRATION

Research shows that staying hydrated keeps us healthy. It can improve our memory and attention span by up to 20%. You can fill water bottles at water stations around college and take these into classrooms.



## EXERCISE

Exercise allows us to clear our heads, release endorphins which help to lift our mood, control our blood sugar and help us sleep better. If you don't exercise try and put some physical activity into your day e.g. going to the college gym, walking to college.



[www.franklin.ac.uk](http://www.franklin.ac.uk)