

HOW TO REVISE

HOW DOES MEMORY WORK?

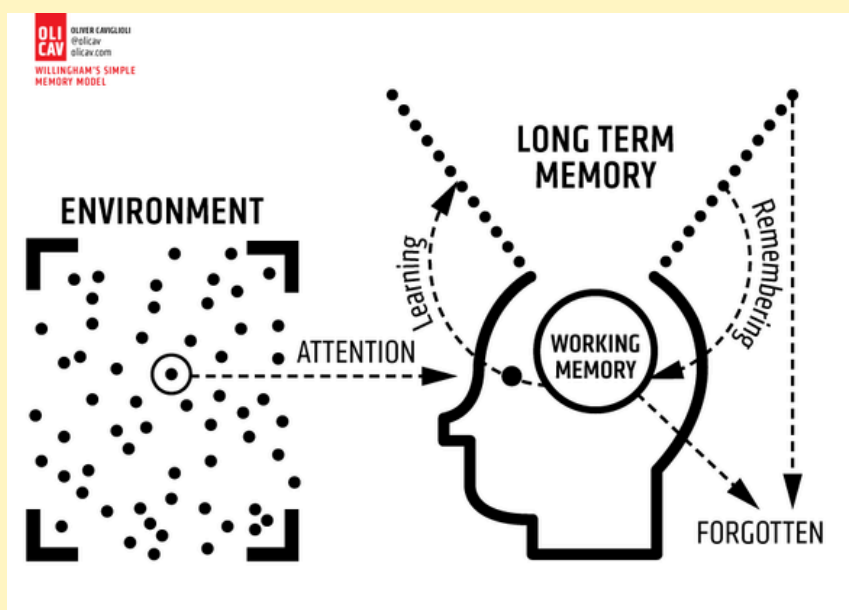
In this diagram, the environment is on the left. This is everything we see, hear, feel and so on. What we give our attention to - what we concentrate on - is moved to our working memory (on the right). Working memory holds all of the things we are thinking about: our reflections at this moment, what we thought about last lesson, the smell of food from the school canteen...

Working memory is where small amounts of information are stored for a very short amount of time, and if we don't do something with that working memory we forget in roughly 30 seconds.

Long term memory is virtually unlimited, but to transfer information or knowledge to it, the thing we are learning must be repeated.

Remembering and recalling information strengthens that pathway so that we can recall it more and more easily each time. If we do this successfully, we can retain information literally forever.

This is where revision comes in!



AIM HIGH, WORK HARD, BE KIND



WHAT DOES GOOD REVISION LOOK LIKE?

Let's start with what revision isn't. Revision is not...

- Re-reading notes (without doing anything else)
- Re-reading a book or textbook (without doing anything else)
- Watching a YouTube video or GCSEPod (without doing anything else)

Revision is about doing something actively with the information we are looking to revise. This might include:

- Making mindmaps
- Creating revision posters
- Writing flashcards and testing yourself
- Making up rhymes or mnemonics
- Blurting (memory dumping)
- Reducing and refining information
- Completing timed practice papers or practice questions

In other words, revision is active. We need to do something with that knowledge.

This booklet is designed to remind you of some core revision techniques to help you use your time productively.

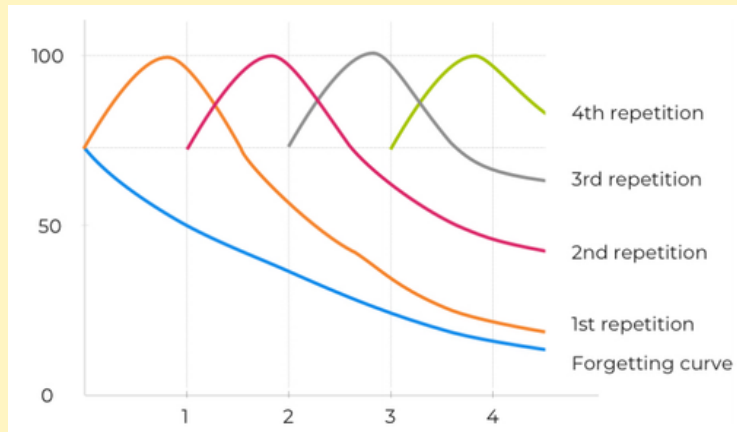
The other important to say is that revision is best done little and often. By this point, two hours per day is a reasonable amount of time to spend revising. You should be doing more than this at the weekend and during school holidays.

Break this in to manageable chunks of around 20-30 minutes, and aim to revise for one hour on one subject, and another hour on a different subject.

You could set a timer for this, or use an app such as 'Marinara Timer' (free on all platforms) or 'Forest' (free on Android).

INTERLEAVING AND SPACED PRACTICE

We recommend interleaving. This technique means mixing up topics within a subject, rather than revising one subject for an entire day. The forgetting curve (below) shows how we forget information more easily if we do not revisit it regularly. This is where 'Do Now' activities in the classroom is so important, because the more regularly we review knowledge, the easier it becomes to recall!



When planning your revision, break down subjects and topics into small chunks. Split these over several days, rather than 'cramming' that information all at once. This might mean that you do 20 minutes per day on one subject, 20 minutes on another, and so on.

You can create a revision timetable like the one below to organise your time, so that you can interleave your learning, and space your revision out right up to the exam.

Remember that revision is about recalling information you already know, it shouldn't mean hours of reading per subtopic. Instead, test your recall with flashcards or try an exam question. Then you can identify any gaps in your knowledge that you need to address.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Topic 1	Topic 4	Topic 2	Topic 5	Topic 3
Topic 2	Topic 5	Topic 3	Topic 1	Topic 4
Topic 3	Topic 1	Topic 4	Topic 2	Topic 5

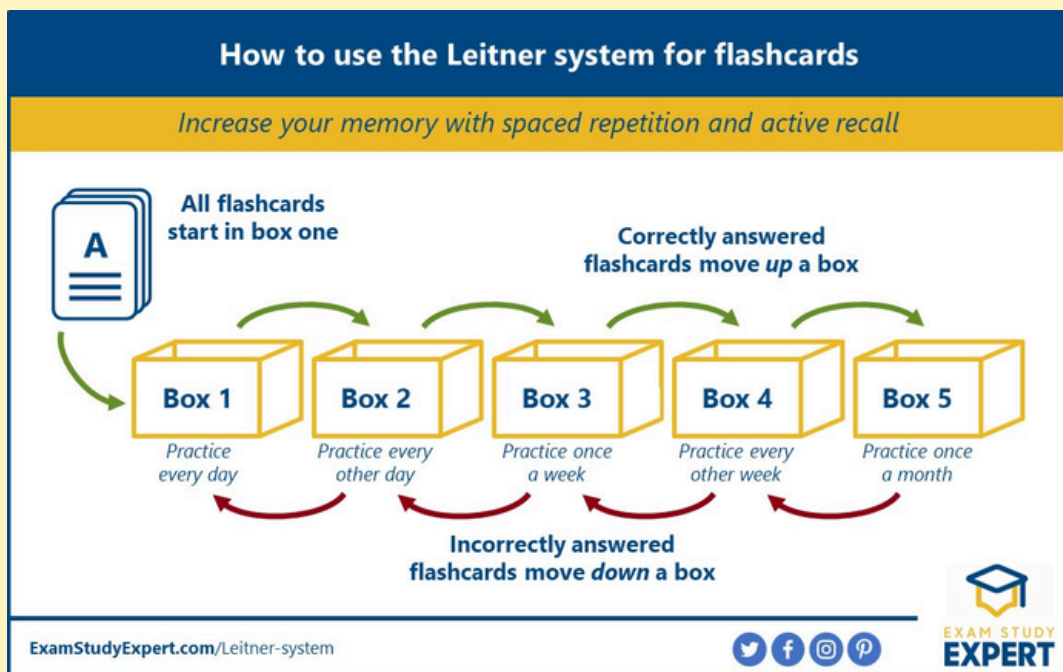
FLASHCARDS: THE LEITNER METHOD

Designing a flashcard is an important part of using flashcards effectively!

Your flashcard should contain a small amount of information. For example:

FRONT OF CARD	REVERSE OF CARD
Key word	Definition
Name of a process	Description or explanation
Image (graph, equipment, object, picture, example)	Explanation
Question	Answer(s)

Then, it is how you use those flashcards which becomes super important: this is where the Leitner method comes in.



Grab 5 boxes (or elastic bands, or envelopes!). Place all flashcards in Box 1. Test yourself on those cards. If you get them correct, place them in Box 2. If you get them incorrect, leave them in Box 1. Each time you get a flashcard correct, move it up one box - the goal is that most of your knowledge will end up in Box 4 or 5! Each time you get a flashcard wrong, move it back into the next box down. Review Box 5 infrequently, but dip into it for a final check the night before your exam.

BLURTING

Blurting allows you to actively recall your knowledge from memory. There are 4 key steps to blurting:

1. Write down everything you can remember about a topic. You could do this as a list, mindmap etc. Choose a manageable topic - for example, don't try and 'blurt' everything you know about biology in one go!
2. Go back to your notes or revision guides, check what you got right and find out what you missed or got wrong. Add this to your original 'blurt' in a different colour.
3. Study the elements you missed or got wrong in an active way - for example through flashcards, creating posters or completing past paper questions.
4. Cover or hide your notes, grab a blank piece of paper and 'blurt' again. Repeat this process until you remember the content you are trying to revise!

OTHER REVISION TECHNIQUES

1. Mind maps

These are a graphical way to represent complex ideas and concepts. You could feature powerful mental triggers like images, colours and shapes to help your brain remember.

2. Post-it notes

You can use colour-coded sticky notes to write and organise important snippets of information like quotes, statistics and dates. You could stick them around your bedroom so you can read them every day, using one colour per subject/topic to help you differentiate.

3. Practice papers

It's an obvious one but doing practice papers for your subjects is one of the most important revision techniques. Try and do as many as you can under exam conditions to get yourself used to the time pressure.

WELLBEING AND EXAMS

Exams can be a challenging time, and the pressure to do well can feel overwhelming, especially if you're feeling pressure from school or family.

It's perfectly normal to feel worried about your exams, but it's important that you find ways to manage your worries.

We've shared some advice below.



Recognise when you're stressed

Think about what signs tell you are stressed - perhaps you find you have a racing heart, or find it difficult to sleep - these are perfectly normal responses. Know the signs so you recognise when you're struggling.



Create a daily timetable

Create a plan and be realistic about what you can achieve each day. Planning your revision time will help you know what you want to study when, which can make revision seem less overwhelming.




Play to your strengths

Not everyone learns the same way, so consider your strengths and how you learn best. You may prefer to read, watch videos, draw diagrams, write lots of notes... Find what works best for you.



Develop coping strategies

There are different ways you can calm your body's stress response. Look online for guided breathing exercises or relaxation techniques (we love these [relaxation techniques from NHS Scotland](#) .



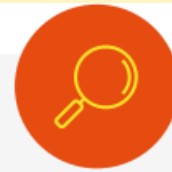
Take regular breaks

Make sure you take regular breaks, as your brain cannot concentrate for hours at a time. If you can, use breaks as an opportunity to go outside, exercise, or spend time with family and friends.



Keep things in perspective

Remember that there's more to life than your grades. Exams are only a small part of the picture, and your results don't define who you are.



Know the signs of stress

What signs tell you that you are stressed?

- Perhaps you do certain things (shop, eat, sleep, study more, don't study)
- Perhaps you think certain things (catastrophise, "I can't do this")
- Perhaps you feel certain ways (grumpy, sad, hopeless, helpless)

Remember that in school you have lots of people who can help you:

- Your year team, including your form tutor
- Your subject teachers, and heads of department
- The senior leadership team
- The safeguarding team

You may also find the following resources useful:

Kooth

Free, safe and anonymous online counselling for young people, including scheduled counselling, drop-in messaging and forums. Login online or download the app.

ChatHealth

Confidential messaging service with a member of the school nursing team. Text: 07480 635060 between 9am-5pm