SHIPLAKE COLLEGE
YEAR 9 REVISION GUIDE

Introduction

How to use this guide

As you get closer to your summer assessments, it's completely normal to feel a mix of nervousness, and maybe feelings of being unsure about where to start. The time before your exams is a chance to build your confidence, improve what you know, and practise the skills you've been learning in class. Good revision isn't just about doing lots of work, it's about learning methods that help you learn best, methods you can use in future, more significant assessments.

This guide has been created to support you through that process. Inside, you'll find practical advice on how to revise efficiently, subject-specific strategies, timetables, exam specifications, and links to past papers. These are designed to help you focus your time, identify your strengths and weaknesses, and revise in a way that leads to real progress.

Classwork

This guide is not a substitute for your **classwork, OneNote, Class Team pages, or your textbooks**. Always **follow the guidance your subject teachers** give you, they know the course, and they know you. Use this guide alongside their advice to develop a revision approach that works best for you.

Useful links

Assessment Timetable

Clinic Timetable

Thinking Frames

Contents

The Science of Memory and Revision

Memory

When we start revising, we often read through our notes, textbooks, or slides. This can help when you're learning something new, but it's not the best way to revise. There are two main reasons for this.

1. Recall vs Recognition

When you try to remember something, your brain can do it in three ways: recognition, recall, and reconstruction.

- **Recognition** is the easiest, it's when you see something and think, "Oh yeah, I remember that!"
- **Recall** is harder, it's when you must remember something without any hints (this is what you need to do in exams).

So, when you read your notes, lots of it looks familiar, which makes you feel like you know everything. But in an exam, you won't have your notes—you'll just have the question. You need to **recall** the information on your own.

That's why just reading isn't enough. It's better to **test yourself**, like using flashcards or answering questions.

2. Levels of Processing

Not all learning is equal—some ways of learning help your brain remember things better than others.

- **Shallow learning** = just looking at information (like reading notes).
- **Medium learning** = hearing information (like listening to a teacher or a video).
- **Deep learning** = understanding meaning and making connections.

Deep learning is the most powerful. This is when you:

- explain something in your own words
- connect it to something else you know
- answer questions about it

So instead of just reading, try doing something with the information, like:

- drawing a mind map
- teaching it to someone else
- answering practice questions

Your Brain and Memory

Let's imagine your brain like a forest with lots of paths.

- The more you use a path, the clearer and easier it becomes to follow.
- If you only use a path once, it becomes harder to find again.

Learning works the same way!

- The first time you learn something, the path is weak.
- Every time you practise it, the path gets stronger.

If you come back to the same topic again and again, your brain builds a strong path, making it much easier to remember in a test.


Your brain works in a similar way to the forest idea.

- The **main paths** are memories you have used lots of times, so they are strong and easy to follow. These are things you know really well, like basic maths or common words.
- The **side paths** are things you remember sometimes, but not often—like certain facts, dates, or names.
- The **new paths** are things you've just started learning. These are the hardest to remember because you haven't practised them much yet.

So... how do we remember new things?

1. **Link it to what you already know**
   Try to connect new information to something familiar. This helps your brain "join it" to a stronger path.
2. **Go over it again and again**
   You need to keep coming back to new ideas. Each time you do, the path in your brain gets stronger and easier to find.

3. **Think about it deeply**
   Don’t just look at your notes—do something with them!
   For example:
   - explain it in your own words
   - draw a diagram or mind map
   - answer questions
4. **Test yourself**
   Try to remember things **without looking** at your notes.
   For example:
   - write down everything you can remember
   - use flashcards
   - answer practice questions

You can find more information about this here: Neuroplasticity and Growth Mindset. What's the connection? - Thinking Matters

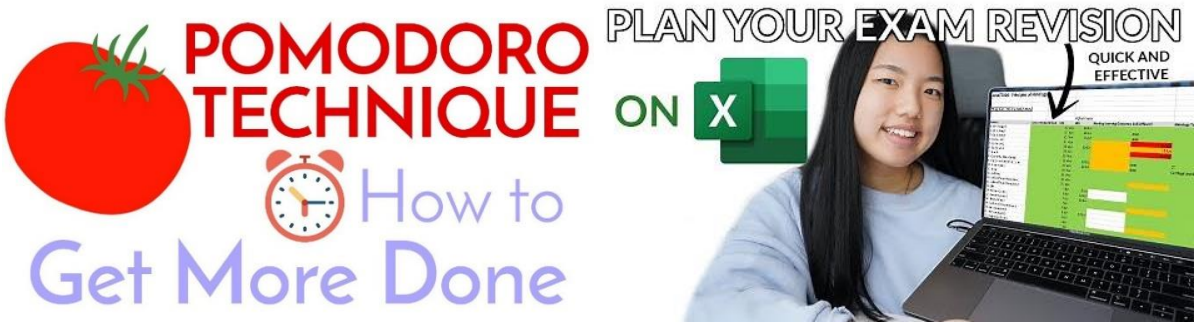
This video below also applies these ideas to your revision.

Shiplake College 5 Step Revision Plan

Step 1- Getting Started

- **Don't** waste your time creating a beautiful and elaborate revision timetable.
  Do have a clear idea of what you need to revise most, and the order your exams come in. This means that each day you know what to focus on, with *more time given to weaker areas*.
- **Don't** divide your time evenly unless you genuinely know everything to the same level.
  Do spend more time on the areas where you feel less confident.
- Don't be overly ambitious about how much you're going to get done in a day.
- **Do** be realistic about how long you can maintain your attention and how much of the day you can reasonably give to revision.
- **Don't** leave things to the last minute—this causes anxiety and lowers performance.
- **Do** start early, both in terms of weeks and months (so you don't sacrifice huge chunks of every day), and early in the day (before there's anything you feel you're missing out on).
- **Don't** give yourself opportunities to be distracted.
- **Do** revise tech-less where possible. The fewer distractions, the more efficiently you'll work.
- **Don't** lie to yourself. If you *started* revising at 10:00 but first got your equipment ready, made a cup of tea, bought a revision guide on Amazon, checked your emails, and had a quick scroll through social media—did you really revise for an hour?

The Pomodoro method is a good place to start, as are simple revision to-do lists.



https://youtu.be/mNBmG24djoY

Step 2- Finding out what you don't know....

It’s very tempting to begin revision by going over topics you already know, as this feels comforting. But if you already know it… why are you revising it? Focus instead on the parts you *don’t* know as well.

But how do you find those?

One technique is a **traffic-light system**. Make a list of all the topics you need to know and colour-code each one:

- **Green** = confident
- **Amber** = semi-confident
- **Red** = not confident

Spend far more time on the reds than the greens.

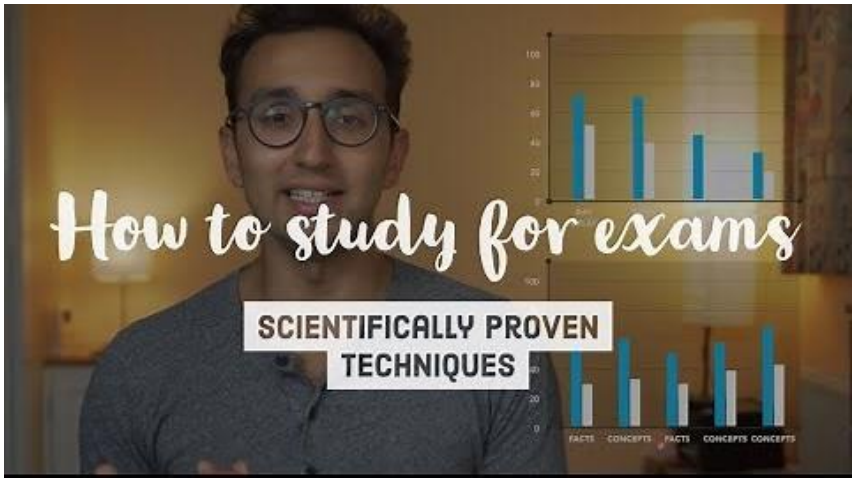
Another technique is **free recall**. Write a topic at the top or middle of a page and jot down *everything* you know about it. When you can’t add any more, check against your notes or textbook to see what you missed—then revise those gaps.

Step 3- Revising/ Studying/ consolidating- whatever you want to call it...

Don’t simply read over your notes or highlight—they do not lead to deeper processing.

Do use techniques that involve **active recall**.

Do look back over the revision techniques outlined above and those on the subject pages



Step 4- Practice

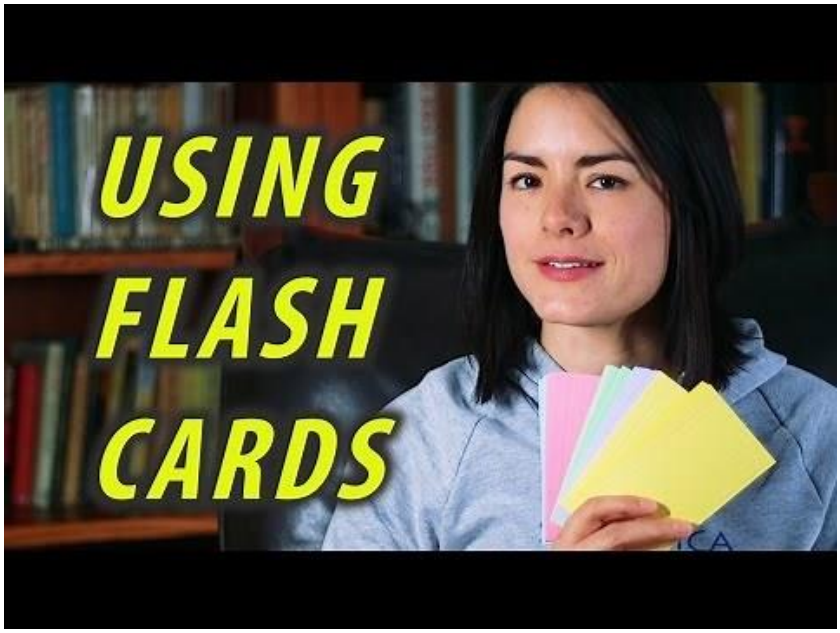
If you were preparing for a performance or a sport, you wouldn't just read about what you need to do—you would **practise** what you'll have to do on the day. Exams are the same.

Do make sure you practise under exam conditions, using real exam questions.

Do test your knowledge with recall-based tasks.

Don't do too many! If you complete 20 papers without checking how well you're doing, you may simply repeat the same mistakes 20 times.

The videos below explain how to use past papers effectively—and how *not* to.



Step 5- Checking

Hopefully, as shown in the video above, you can see that exam practice is important—but it must be done **effectively**.

Make sure you mark your work, or ask someone else to mark it for you. When marking, be honest and harsh. You lose more by thinking you're doing better than you really are.

One of the best strategies is to mark your work yourself first, then ask your teacher to check your marking.

Revision Lists

Year 9
Biology
Chemistry
English
French
Geography
History
Mathematics
Physics
Spanish
Theology and Philosophy