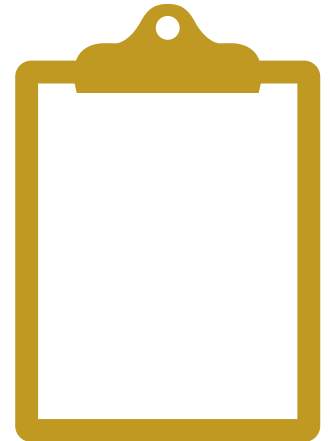
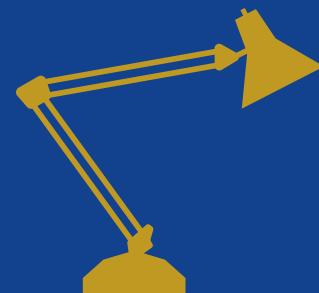
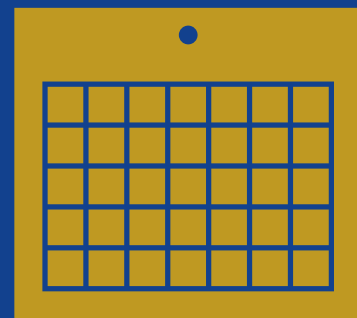


# Effective revision habits & strategies: A study guide for pupils & parents.

---



**Retrieval Practice**  
**Spaced Practice**  
**Concrete Examples**  
**Elaboration**  
**Interleaving**  
**Dual Coding**  
**Exam vocabulary**  
**Well-being strategies & revision tools**



# What is retrieval practice?

**"Retrieval practice** is a learning strategy where we focus on getting information out. Through the act of retrieval, or calling information to mind, our memory for that information is strengthened and forgetting is less likely to occur. Retrieval practice is a powerful tool for improving learning."



Use your class notes & textbooks to make a list of the important information & content that you need to know across different subjects.

Then close your books & test yourself. You can create quizzes, use flashcards or complete past exam papers. **Make sure you don't use your notes!**

Retrieve as much information as you can then check your answers. It's important to know what you know and what you don't know ... yet!

Use your answers to inform the next stage of your revision, focus on the areas that you struggled to recall from memory.

# What is spaced practice?

"Start planning early for exams and set aside a little bit of time everyday. Five hours spread out over two weeks is better than the same five hours all at once."

This is **spaced practice** & it is regarded as one of the most effective revision strategies.



Divide up your revision into short manageable chunks of time . When revising aim for 20 - 30 minutes per session.

**Mass practice or cramming is not effective & can be stressful.** This is when you study for a very intense period of time just before the exam.

You need to plan your time carefully to ensure all subjects & topics are covered in shorter chunks over a longer period of time.

Dividing up your revision into smaller, manageable sections will benefit you in the long term - the revision you do for mocks will stick for the final exams!

## What are concrete examples?

“Students often gain a false sense of confidence in their abilities to memorise new material. Using **concrete**, relevant, real life examples can help students understand abstract ideas and extend information retention.”



**Concrete examples involves finding & using specific examples to help develop & deepen understanding of abstract ideas.**

Abstract ideas can be difficult to understand & explain. Our memories find it easier to remember concrete examples better than abstract information.

Foreshadowing can be explained with a very specific concrete example - in Romeo & Juliet the tragic ending is subtly foreshadowed in the very first act of the play.

Look through your books & class notes searching for concrete examples that are relevant to the idea you are studying or create your own if you can.

# What is elaboration?

"The term **elaboration** can be used to mean a lot of different things. However, when we are talking about studying using elaboration, it involves explaining and describing ideas with many details. Elaboration also involves making connections among ideas you are trying to learn."



**Elaboration involves asking further questions & making links to help you connect new information with what you already know.**

Ask yourself questions about a topic to delve deeper. The more information you have about a specific topic the stronger your grasp & ability to recall.

When you learn about the causes of WW1 you could ask which causes are linked together? Which causes are short or long term? What was the major cause?

Another way to elaborate is to take two ideas or concepts & think about the various ways they are similar & how they are different.

# What is interleaving?

**"Interleaving"** is a process where students mix & combine multiple subjects & topics while they study in order to improve their learning. Blocked practice on the other hand, involves studying one topic very thoroughly before moving to another. Interleaving has been shown to be more effective than blocked practice leading to better long-term retention."



Mon

Tues

Weds

Thurs

Fri

Algebra

Ratio

Statistics

Ratio

Algebra

Geometry

Statistics

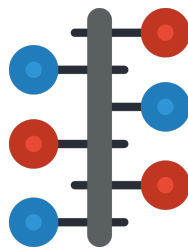
Algebra

Geometry

Statistics

# What is dual coding?

**Dual coding** is the process of combining verbal materials with visual materials. There are many ways to visually represent materials, such as with infographics, timelines, cartoon/comic strips, diagrams and graphic organisers."



**Dual coding involves you the learner drawing images, graphs, diagrams or timelines to support your revision notes.**

When you are revising using your class materials find or create visuals that link with the information. Compare & combine the visuals with the words.

Don't worry if you don't consider yourself an artist - it isn't about the quality of your illustrations, the focus is to improve and deepen your understanding.

Make sure your images/diagrams are relevant. Be careful when using photos as too many background images can detract from the main points.

# Exam vocabulary - Command words

There will be subject specific key terms that you need to learn for each subject. Below are a range of **command words** that could be used in your exams. Do you understand what the exam question is asking you? Command words can vary slightly across different subjects so it is important you understand the command words in the exam question & in the correct context.



**Analyse** - Examine something in detail and try to explain or interpret it.

**Annotate** - Add to a diagram, image or piece of text to illustrate or describe features rather than just identify them which is labelling.

**Assess** - Consider different options/arguments/factors and weigh them up to reach a conclusion about their effectiveness or validity.

**Calculate** - Work out the value of something.

**Compare** - Give a point by point identification of similarities and differences.

**Define** - This means *what is meant by* ... give the precise meaning of a term or concept.

**Describe** - Provide an account in detail of an event/individual/concept etc.

**Discuss** - Set out both sides of an argument & reach a conclusion, including evidence.

**Evaluate** - Consider different options/factors & reach a conclusion about their importance/impact/value/worth.

**Examine** - Consider carefully & provide a detailed account of the topic.

**Explain** - Provide a detailed description or interpretation of a term/concept etc.

**Identify** - Point out & name from a number of possibilities.

**Illustrate** - Refer to a specific case study or example (not illustrate as in draw).

**Label** - Point out specific features on a diagram, image or piece of text.

**Justify** - Explain why your selected choice/judgement is better than other options.

**Summarise** - Sum up the main points/arguments this can be the similar to outline.



## Well-being during exams

The exam period can be stressful that is why it's very important that you revise & prepare as this can help to reduce exam anxiety. In addition to revising there are other strategies you can do to look after your **mental & physical health**.



**Eat.** Diet is important so don't neglect it during the exam period. Don't skip meals, stay consistent with a healthy balance of meals & stay hydrated.

**Sleep.** Staying up late to revise is a bad idea! Sleep deprivation can have a very negative impact on concentration, performance & memory.

**Exercise.** Take regular breaks from revision with exercise. Take part in a sport you enjoy, go for a walk or any activity that is active & part of your daily routine.

**Relax.** Relax during the exam period? Yes! It is essential that you do make time to switch off & have a break. Watch Netflix, read or talk to friends.

## Useful websites & social media

The **internet** can be a great source of revision support. For subject specific examples of useful websites and YouTube videos ask your teachers for recommendations because the quality of revision materials online varies considerably.



### Useful websites:

<https://www.learningscientists.org>

<https://retrievelearn.org>

<https://tutor2u.net>



### Useful social media sites:

Instagram @learningscientists - Facebook Learning Scientists - YouTube The Learning Scientists - Twitter @acethattest - Twitter @retrievelearn - App Headspace (to support relaxation) - App Calm - App Quizlet Flashcards

# References



<https://www.retrievalpractice.org/>

<http://www.learningscientists.org/>

<https://chronotopeblog.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/wellington-college-study-guide1.pdf>

<https://academicaffairs.arizona.edu/Interleaving>

**Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning. Mark A. McDaniel. Peter C. Brown. Henry L. Roediger III. (2014)**

**Strengthening the Student Toolbox. Study Strategies to Boost Learning. John Dunlosky. (2013)**