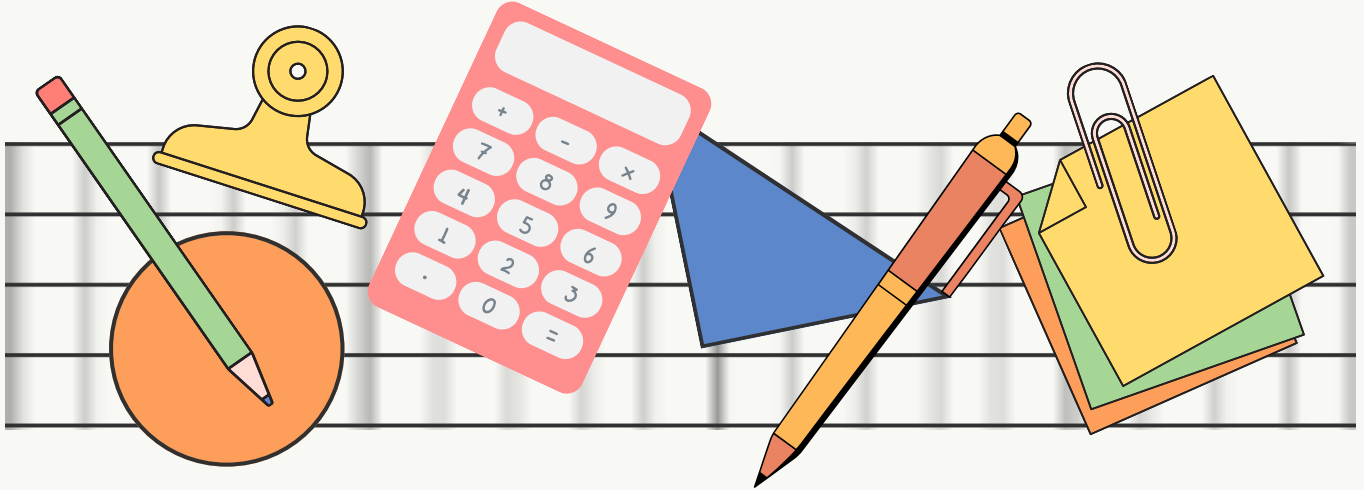

GCSE Revision information

BALCARRAS SCHOOL



- WHY SHOULD I REVISE?
- WHEN SHOULD I REVISE?
- HOW SHOULD I REVISE?
- WHAT SHOULD I REVISE?
- HOW CAN I BETTER COPE DURING REVISION AND EXAMS?

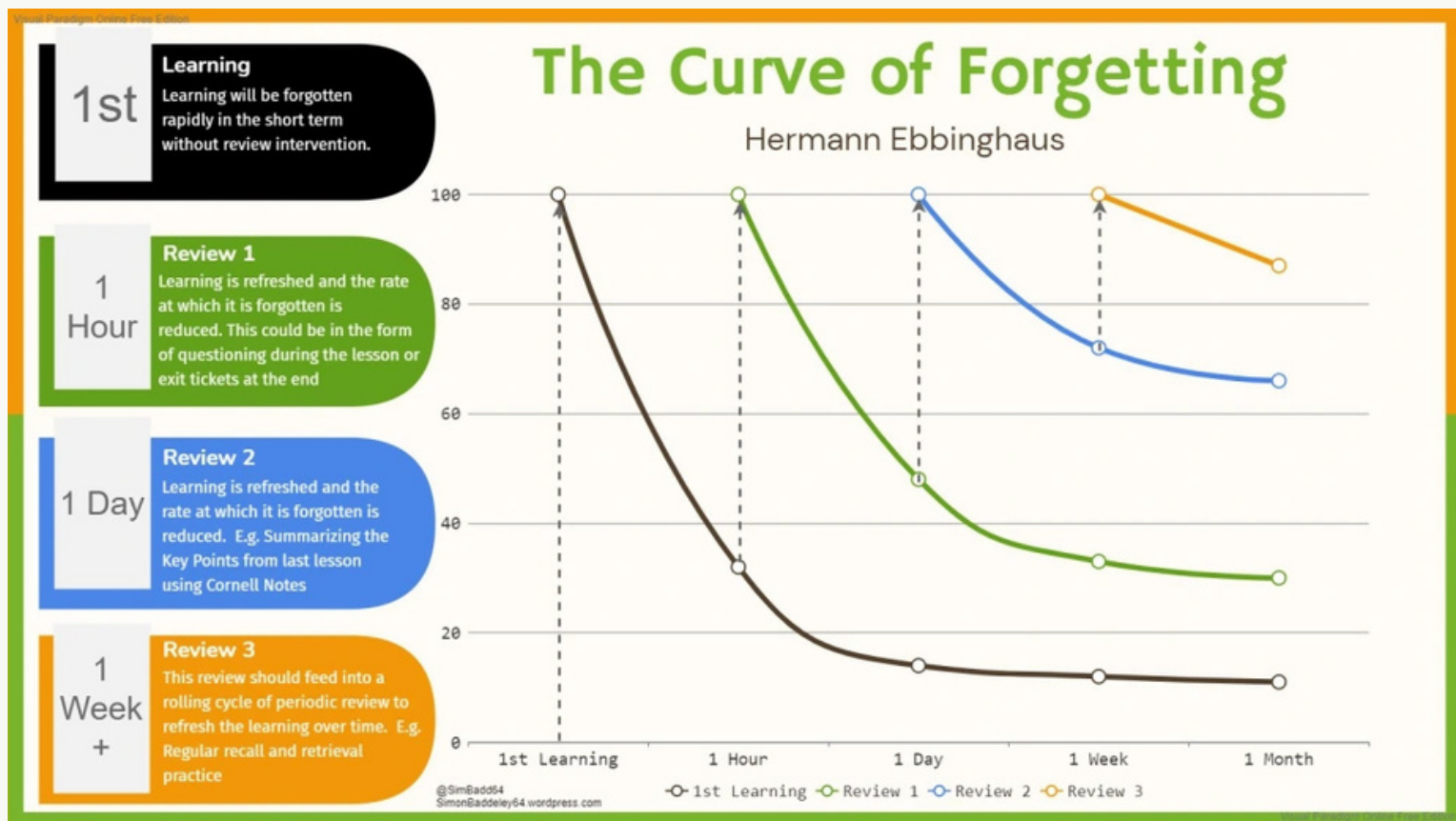
Why should I revise?

Revising for GCSEs is crucial as it directly impacts academic performance and future opportunities. According to research, students who engage in regular revision are more likely to achieve higher grades compared to those who don't. For instance, a study by the Education Endowment Foundation found that students who revised for at least 10 hours a week scored, on average, 2–3 grades higher than their peers. This highlights the importance of dedicated study time. Revising helps reinforce key concepts, improve memory retention, and boosts confidence, making students better prepared for exam conditions. The revision process enables students to identify weak areas and focus on them, which increases their chances of mastering the content. Furthermore, regular revision reduces anxiety and stress, as it familiarizes students with the exam format and content.

When should I revise?

“If we learn something new, but then make no attempt to relearn that information, we remember less and less of it as the hours, days and weeks go by.” Ebbinghaus

The forgetting curve illustrates how memory declines over time, showing that we forget information rapidly unless it is reviewed periodically.



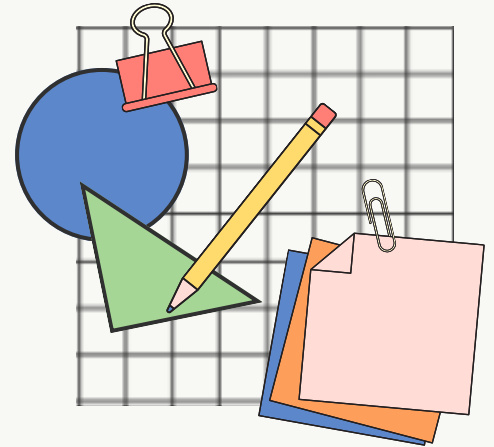
You can use Ebbinghaus's forgetting curve to improve revision by spacing out your study sessions over time. The curve shows that we forget information quickly after learning it, but revisiting material at spaced intervals helps reinforce memory. After initial learning, you should review the content after a short period, then gradually increase the time between revisions. For example, reviewing after a day, then three days, a week, and so on. This technique combats forgetting and strengthens long-term retention, making it more effective than cramming. Tools like flashcards or apps can help schedule these spaced reviews efficiently.

How should I revise?

When starting your revision you need to remember The 3 R's to help you be as effective in your work as possible.

REFINE, REVISE, REVIEW

You need to have covered all three of these steps in order to ensure you are revising well.



REFINE

This step ensures knowing exactly what it is you should be revising. We often focus on areas we feel confident on or enjoy learning, rather than ensuring we are covering all of the content and skills needed.

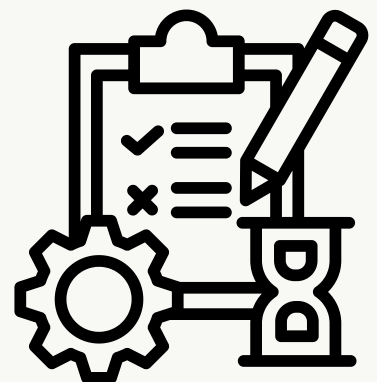


Know the course

Look at the course specification, revision guide or course content sheet given by your teacher and ensure you have covered all course content.

Identify your priorities

Look back at previous tests or assessments to identify areas of weakness. You can also do this by RAG rating the course specification.



Create a plan

Make a plan of what you need to revise and by when to ensure you have covered everything.

REVISE

This step ensures you are revising the content. You will find there are certain styles of 'revision' that are more effective for you. But it is important that you use a range of styles and the ones suggested below are scientifically proven to be the best for learning content.

Ineffective revision techniques include re-reading, copying, underlining or highlighting text.



Blurting

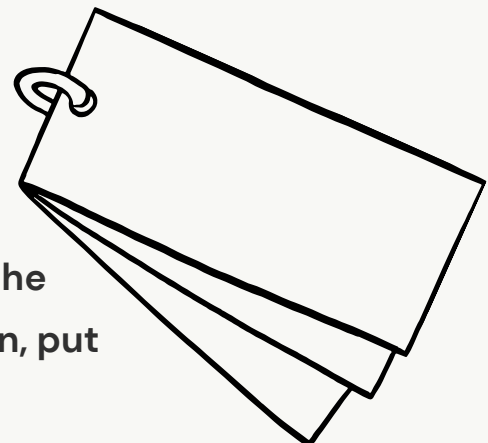
Blurting revision is a study technique that involves writing down everything you can remember about a topic from memory.

1. Study the material: Make sure you understand the topic.
2. Close your notes: Write down everything you can remember about the topic.
3. Compare to your notes: Check what you missed or got wrong.
4. Study again: Focus on the areas you didn't remember the first time.
5. Repeat: Repeat the process until you know everything you need to know for your exam.

Flash cards

Making revision flashcards involves writing a question or key concept on one side of a card and the corresponding answer or explanation on the other side. For an extra layer of spaced retrieval, you can mix your cards up so you are revising different subjects or topics in one sitting.

1. Go through your set of cards testing yourself with the information.
2. If you get something wrong, put those cards to one side.
3. When you get to the end, work your way back through the cards you got wrong. If you get that question wrong again, put it on the 'wrong pile' again.
4. Complete this process until you know everything confidently.



REVISE



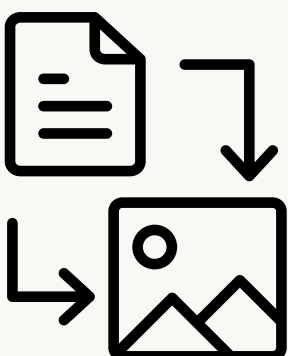
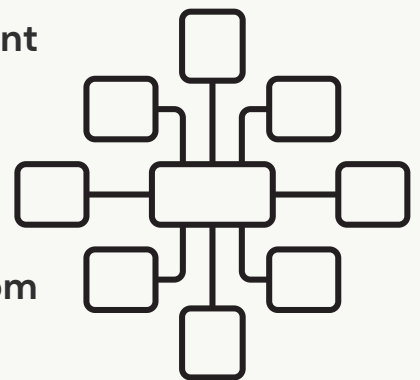
Condense text

Condensing text during revision is important because it helps to remove unnecessary information, making your writing more concise, focused, and easier to understand and remember. If you read a paragraph or page, condense that information into a few key words or sentences.

Mind maps

Using mind maps in revision is a valuable study technique that helps you visually organize information, identify key relationships between concepts, and improve memory recall.

- Choose your topic: Identify the central subject you want to revise.
- Write the central idea: Place the main topic in the centre of your page.
- Create branches: Draw branches radiating outward from the centre, representing key subtopics.
- Add details: On each branch, write down essential information, keywords, or phrases related to the subtopic.
- Use visuals: Incorporate relevant images, symbols, or diagrams to enhance recall.
- Colour code: Assign different colours to different sections to visually differentiate ideas.
- Connect branches: Use lines or arrows to show relationships between different concepts.

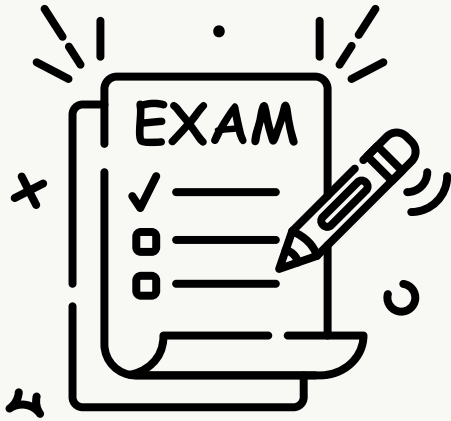


Dual coding

Dual coding is a valuable revision technique because it uses the brain's ability to process information through both visual and verbal channels, resulting in improved memory retention by creating multiple pathways to access the information, making it easier to recall during exams. Add pictures or photos to your flash cards, mind maps or notes.

REVIEW

This step ensures you are reviewing your learning to see where there are gaps in your knowledge and understanding.



Exam papers

Completing past or practice exam papers is an excellent way of checking gaps in your knowledge and gaining confidence in exam technique. Make sure you are regularly completing exam papers in timed, exam conditions. You can find exam papers online, on the VLE or ask your teacher for them. You can use mark schemes to mark your own papers or tests or ask your teachers to look at them.

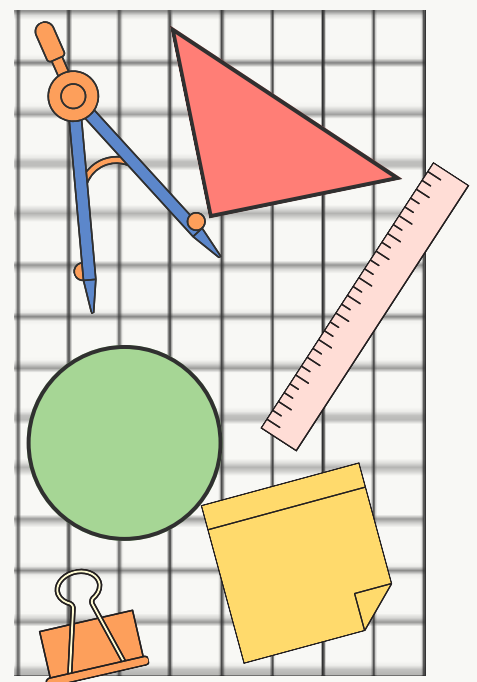
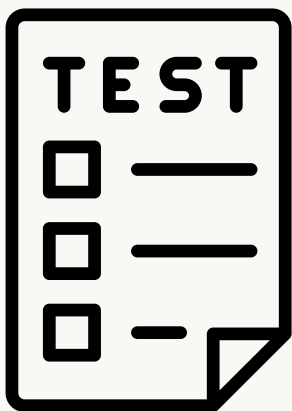
Quizzing

Completing short answer quizzes on the topics you have revised will help you to embed knowledge and review what you have learnt. You can find quizzes online on sites such as Seneca and Quizlet, or use your flash cards. You could also work with your friends to make quizzes for each other on topics you have revised.



Multiple choice test

Taking multiple choice tests on content you have revised will enable you to ensure key terms and concepts are understood. Revision guides often have multiple choice quizzes you can use but there are also websites such as Educational Quizzes or BBC Bitesize that provide them for free.



APPS



Exam Countdown Lite

This is a free and simple app to help keep track of when your exams are to help you priorities revision and make a revision timetable.



Quizlet

Quizlet is a free online learning platform that helps users study and learn through flashcards, practice questions, and other interactive tools.



Mindly

This app helps you to collate and organise information through mind maps.



Memrise

The Memrise app is a free app that helps users learn languages, memorize facts, and improve their memory.



Seneca

The Seneca Learning app is a free online platform that helps students in the UK revise and complete homework for GCSE, A Level, KS2, and KS3. It's designed to help students learn faster and remember topics better.



Chegg

Chegg is an online learning platform that offers academic support to students. It includes a textbook rental service, online tutoring, and other tools to help students learn.



Fabulous

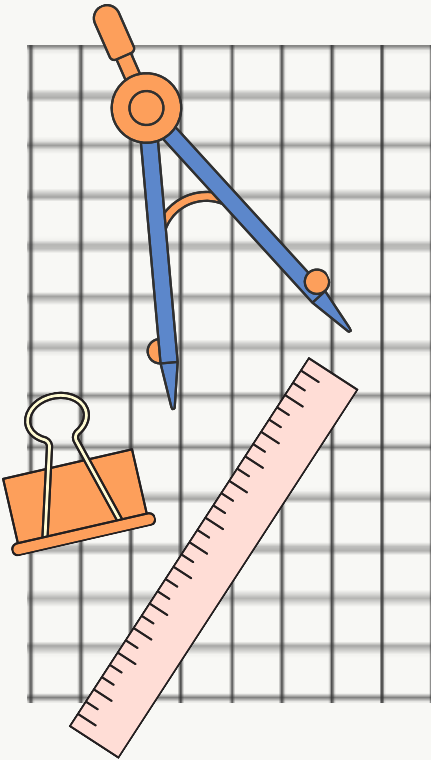
Fabulous is an award-winning self-care coaching app that harnesses the power and wisdom of behavioural science to help you develop lasting healthy habits.



Flora

Flora is a free productivity app that helps you stay off your phone, clear to-do lists, and build positive, life-changing habits.

What should I revise?



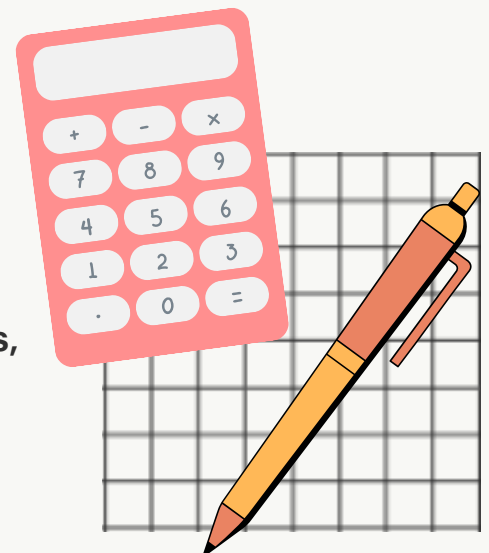
It is important that you have covered all of the content that could come up in your exams in the weeks leading up to them. In order to ensure you have engaged with everything you first of need to to complete the 'REFINE' section of your revision. To help you with this your teachers have created a revision topic checklist which you can find on the VLE.

Revision timetables

You should use a revision timetable with spaced practice to improve retention and avoid last-minute cramming. Spaced practice involves spreading out study sessions over time, allowing the brain to reinforce knowledge through repeated exposure. Research shows that revisiting topics at intervals strengthens memory and understanding, making recall easier during exams.

To create an effective revision timetable, students should:

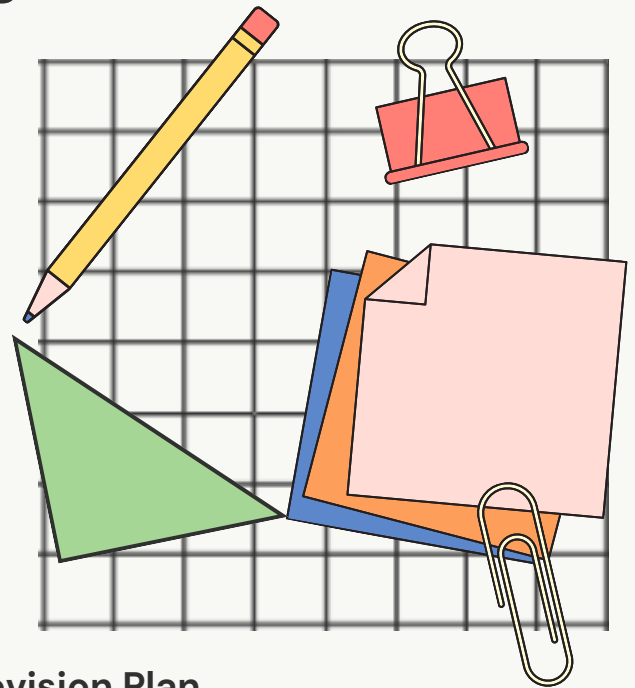
- Plan early – Start revision weeks or months in advance.
- Break subjects into topics – Allocate time to each area based on difficulty.
- Schedule regular reviews – Revisit topics every few days or weeks.
- Mix subjects – Studying different topics in one session enhances learning.
- Use active recall or review – Practice past papers, quizzes, or teaching concepts to others.



You can find a revision guide template on the VLE.

How can I better cope during revision and exams?

Exam stress is common among students, but managing it effectively can improve performance and well-being. Research suggests that stress-reducing techniques, such as mindfulness and structured revision, can enhance focus and reduce anxiety. Here are some evidence-based strategies to help you cope:.



Create a Realistic Revision Plan

- Use spaced practice to avoid last-minute cramming.
- Break study sessions into manageable chunks with regular breaks (Pomodoro Technique).

Look After Your Well-being

- Exercise regularly – Physical activity boosts mood and reduces stress hormones.
- Eat a balanced diet – Nutritious food improves concentration and brain function.
- Get enough sleep – Sleep strengthens memory and reduces anxiety.

Manage Stress Positively

- Practice mindfulness or meditation – Research shows this lowers cortisol (stress hormone) levels.
- Use breathing techniques – Deep breathing calms the nervous system.
- Challenge negative thoughts – Replace “I’ll fail” with “I’m doing my best.”

Stay Social and Seek Support

- Talk to friends, family, or teachers about worries.
- Study with peers for motivation and shared learning.