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The Complete Guide to A Level Revision



Contents

- 3 10 Steps to Create the Perfect Revision Space
- 4 How to Take a Study Break
- 5 What to Eat and Drink When You're Revising
- 6 Revision Tips for Different Types of Learners
- 8 Revision Tools to Help You Pass Your Exams
- 10 Why Past Papers Are The Best Way to Revise
- 11 Effective Exam Techniques
- 12 The Best Organisations to Help Your Health During Exams



STUDENT HUT

Student Hut is a free online resource designed to help you through your university life, from application through to graduation and beyond. Use the Find a Course Quiz to narrow down your options and pick the right university and course for you. Read over 25,000 reviews from current students, compare courses side by side and check out their league table to find the best place for you to study.
www.studenthut.com



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Gojimo is the UK's leading free revision app for GCSE and A Level. Try out over 160,000 free revision quiz questions on English, maths, biology, chemistry, physics, history, geography and more. Download for free on iOS or Android today, or study online at www.gojimo.com

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10 Steps To Create the Perfect Revision Space

1. Get Rid of the Clutter

Having an untidy desk and room will make it harder to find things, stress you out and present an easy way to procrastinate. Your first priority when setting up a study space should be to get everything as organised as you possibly can.

2. Keep Distractions Away

What are the things that most commonly distract you from work? Write down your answers to this question and then make sure none of them are anywhere near the area where you're going to be revising. Television, computers and phones are the obvious ones to avoid.

3. Get comfy

No-one wants to be spending hours every day in a space that isn't actually comfortable. While it's not advisable to do your revision in bed, you should definitely be working somewhere that's comfy enough for you to get absorbed in your work.

4. Let There Be Light

Lighting is one of the most important things to a room's mood and you should try and find the right level for you. Make it too dark and you'll be straining to read your notes and tiring yourself out. However lights that are too bright can leave you feeling overstimulated and may contribute to headaches or stress. Try and get as much natural light as possible to minimise these negative effects.

5. Set the Noise Levels

How your revision space sounds is just as important as how it looks. Some people will find that they need background noise to get any work done while others will benefit from perfect silence. Whatever your preference, you should try and find a place where the noise will be consistent and suited to your tastes.

6. Personalise It

If you're going to be spending hours every day in one place, you should definitely add some personal touches to it. Leave some photos or items of personal significance close by to help keep you grounded and inject some colour to boost your mood. It should be your zone- do whatever will improve it for you!

7. Make it Easy to Manage Your Time

A clock should be easily visible from where you are sitting, ideally an easy-to-read digital one and not a smartphone (otherwise you may be unable to check the time without checking your Snapchat as well). It is also good to keep a revision schedule close by so you always know what you should be doing and how long you should be spending on it.

8. Get Your Supplies Ready

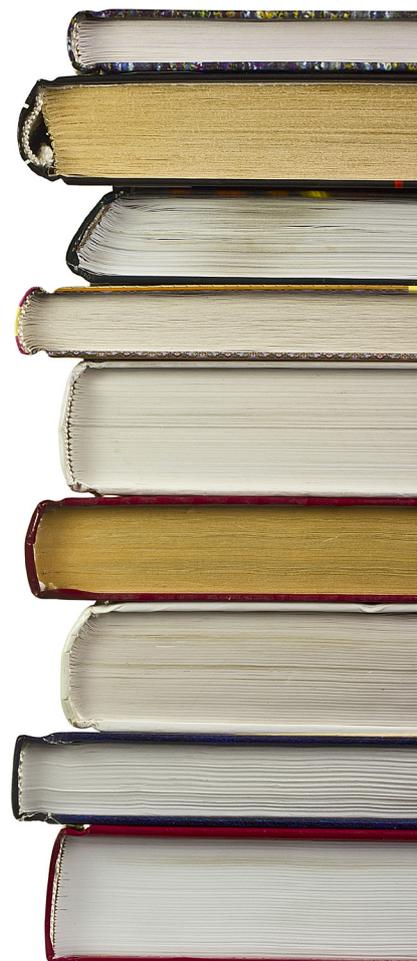
Your revision will be broken up constantly if you keep getting up to find the stationary and snacks you need to keep your work flowing. Ensure that you have everything you will require on a regular basis close to hand and you'll save yourself time and energy that is better spent studying or taking a proper break.

9. Maintain it

Setting up your dream study space is only half the battle. It's vital that over the days and weeks you don't allow it to become messy and disorganised. Don't leave out books or work that you don't need urgently and dedicate five minutes every morning to cleaning up the room you'll be working in.

10. Remember: There Are More Important Things

It's easy to convince yourself that you're being really productive when you're creating a study space but it can sometimes become a form of procrastination itself. Remember that the most important thing about having an area to revise in is that you actually do some revision. If you find yourself organising your post-it notes for the fifth time in an hour, you might not be getting the best use out of your time.



How to Take a Study Break

There's more to effective revision than simply reading through textbooks for hours. It's essential that you put as much effort into your resting as you do into your working. Use these tips to make sure you have the most energising study breaks that you possibly can.

Get Active

It's pretty difficult to get away from sitting down when you're revising. Unfortunately, being hunched over a desk or laptop can be really unhealthy in both the short and long term. The best way to counteract this is to build little bits of activity into your schedule. Use your breaks to stand up, stretch and walk around. You'll be amazed at how much it can do to make you feel positive.

Get Away From Your Workspace

If you spend both your working hours and your breaks sitting at a laptop, the two can start to blur into one. The best way to avoid this is to get away from your study zone. Find a reason to go into another room or just go for a quick walk. This will give you a quick hit of exercise and will help you keep your relaxing separate from your work (and therefore more enjoyable!).

Have Something to Eat and Drink

It's crucial that you keep yourself well fed and hydrated when you're working. Your body and brain need energy to maintain your focus and forgetting this is the quickest way to find your mind wandering. Eat and drink the right things to keep yourself topped up and focused for longer periods.

Avoid Napping

It can be tempting to turn a study break into a sleeping session, especially after a long day of revision. However it's important that you try and resist this urge! A nap can leave you feeling groggy for the rest of the day or stop you sleeping properly at night, meaning you'll only need more sleep the next day. Even worse, you

might oversleep and lose hours for a break that was supposed to only take half an hour.

Get Human Contact

If you're revising by yourself it's very easy to feel cut off from everyone else. It's not good for your mental health to be isolated from the rest of the world for such long periods of time so try and get as much human contact as you can into your day. A face-to-face conversation is best but a phone call or a bit of time on your group chat can do the job as well. Even a quick trip to the shops can be a great way of making you feel part of the normal world again.

Stick to Your Schedule

Whether you prefer your time out little and often or need long pauses to refresh yourself, make sure you know how long your break will last when you start it. There's nothing more damaging to your schedule than a 10 minute pause that turns into an entire afternoon of time off. Allow yourself the time you need but resist the urge to treat yourself to "just one more minute"- you'll be able to enjoy your breaks more if you aren't feeling guilty about the work you said you'd be doing at that time.

Do Something You Enjoy

You know better than anyone else what to do to make you feel restored. While some sites may tell you to avoid Facebook or playing videogames for the duration of your day, you may find it easier in the long term to treat yourself rather than resisting the things you enjoy all the time and feeling more stressed as a result. If you can keep it in moderation, don't worry too much about how you spend your downtime.

Don't Be Too Hard On Yourself

No-one would deny that revising day after day is tough. It's natural to sometimes get distracted or take a little more time off than you intended to. The most important thing to do when this happens is to not stress about it and try not to let it affect your overall revision plan.

What to Eat and Drink When You're Revising

To maximise your potential when you're revising, you need to think about what you're eating and drinking. Some things you should consume regularly to keep yourself feeling focused while others may knock your productivity if you have them often but are perfect as an occasional treat.



Regularly

Water

Drinking water frequently will keep you hydrated and help your body function. Keep a bottle near you while you work to keep yourself topped up.

Fruit and Veg

They've got their healthy reputation for a reason. Fruit and vegetables are just full of stuff that's really good for your body. Find a few that you like and try to work them into your diet regularly.

Fish

Fish is a bit of a superfood. It is high in protein and Omega 3 with none of the negative side effects that can come with meat. This makes it the perfect choice for a post revision dinner.

Eggs

As well as being versatile and delicious, eggs are high in protein, vitamins and minerals. They're a really good choice for an energising breakfast to help you start your day.

Nuts

Looking for something to snack on that won't leave you craving more? Nuts (or nut butters) may be the solution. They're indulgent enough to make you feel like you're treating yourself but have numerous health benefits.

Occasionally

Sugary treats

Foods that are high in sugar such as chocolate and sweets can be tempting as a quick and tasty energy boost. However, the sugar rush will only be temporary and may leave you feeling tired and restless afterwards.

Fast Food

The scientific evidence against fast food is overwhelming. It won't provide any of the nutrients your body needs and will often just leave you craving more unhealthy food. Think of takeaways and burgers as an occasional reward to be worked towards rather than a regular way to get your meals.

Coffee

In small doses, coffee is a great accompaniment to studying. It can boost your concentration, wake you up in the morning, or just be a little luxury to brighten your day. However too much of it can make you restless, ruin your sleep pattern and prevent you from getting any meaningful work done.

Snacks

Even if you snack healthily, it's important not to overdo it. If you find yourself eating little and often instead of a few big meals a day, you'll find it harder to eat well and keep a regular routine.

Alcohol

Unsurprisingly, alcohol and revision do not go well together. Try and avoid it entirely for the duration of the exam period to avoid the headaches, tiredness and other side effects that it can cause.



Revision Tips for Different Types of Learner

Not everyone learns in the same way. Some of us are better at taking in information visually while others much prefer to listen or watch a video. If you're still not sure what might work best for you, take a look at the tips below for some additional pointers.

If you are unsure of what type of learner you are, you can take a quick quiz to find out on the Education Planner website: www.educationplanner.org/students/self-assessments/learning-styles.shtml



Visual learner

If you find you can bring up a mental picture of your class notes when you are thinking back over a lesson, then chances are you are a visual learner. To capitalise on this you need to make your revision techniques as visually stimulating as possible.

- Make your revision notes as colourful as you can. Use highlighter pens or coloured pens to section out different types of information.
- Vary the layout of your notes, making each page slightly different so you can quickly bring up a mental picture of the page containing the information you are trying to recall. Also try cartoons, flow charts, graphs, bullet points, timelines and sketches – all help to break up the text and make it more memorable.
- Mindmaps are an ideal revision tool that combines all these ideas – colourful, visual images that contain a high volume of information in one single image.
- Many students, but not all, find that writing their notes out by hand leads to a higher retention rate than if you are creating resources onscreen.



Auditory learners

Do you prefer to watch videos or listen to someone else talking through the topic rather than reading or writing notes? If so you could be an auditory learner.

- Try recording key learning points onto your phone and then listening to them as you walk or take the bus to school. It's a great use of otherwise dead time and will help reinforce revision you have already done.
- Similarly you could try playing your recordings back to yourself as you go to sleep.
- If you are musical, why not create rhymes, raps or a song to help you remember key points?. Don't be shy, nobody but you has to hear them. If you need inspiration check out Lana Rose on YouTube. www.youtube.com/watch?v=JQVKT4rU4sl
- If you like revising with a partner then take it in turns to explain concepts to each other in your own words. Or make up questions for your partner to answer and then reverse the roles.
- Try podcasts – there are lots of free ones available on iTunes. Again you can download these and listen to them on the go, or before you go to sleep.
- Some people find that listening to soothing, gentle music can help aid concentration and relaxation. However be careful not to either pick music that is too loud or upbeat as it could be distracting. Conversely music that is too soporific will lull you to sleep, somewhat defeating the purpose!
- Some auditory learners need quiet for concentration so why not try working in your local library – the change of scene breaks up the task and the quiet will help you focus.



Kinaesthetic (Tactile) learners

Do you have difficulty sitting still? Are you always on the go, and speak with lots of hand gestures? Do you like to take things apart to find out how they work? Chances are you are a kinaesthetic or tactile learner. You learn best by try wherever possible, to be active, act things out, make things and revise on the go.

- Sticky notes are your friend. Write each key point or concept on a sticky note and post them at strategic positions around your room. Then each time you walk past, stop to review the notes.
- Colour coding will help you keep things separate but be careful not to mix up your sticky notes between subjects.
- You might prefer to learn by doing, so make your study time active. Try walking and reading your notes out loud to yourself. Go and visit museums or exhibitions that can help you - the experience will be more memorable than revision alone.

Revision Timetables

Get organised first. It helps to know how much time you have left before each exam, and to block out your time so you can be sure to give each subject the attention it deserves. A well-structured timetable will keep you on track and keep you focused on your priorities.

The Exam Countdown

This app is free for iOS and Android. It does exactly what it says on the tin – plug in the exams you are taking and get a daily countdown to each paper.

Get Revising

A fantastic free online resource offering a build your own timetable planner plus study tips and past papers for a wide range of subjects.

www.getrevising.co.uk

Flashcard Templates

You can easily make flashcards using coloured card and pens, but if you prefer to make your own flashcards on your computer, there are several free templates you can use including:

www.class-templates.com/flashcard-template.html

www.cambridgeenglishonline.com/Flashcard_maker

Revision Tools to Help You Pass Your Exams

So you've read through your notes but you want a little help with the next stage of revision. Here is a handy roundup of some of the best tools available to help you get on top of your revision and ace those exams.

Mind maps

Mind mapping is a fantastic visual technique for organising a lot of information around a single topic in one place. The act of putting a mind map together is an excellent way of checking your retention, and the finished map can be reviewed and revisited time and again to help reinforce key points.

Again there are several sources of free mind mapping software that you can use either online or download to your computer. Some are only free for a limited trial period.

www.mindmaple.com/Downloads/Windows

www.mindmup.com/#m:new

www.bubbl.us

York Notes

Essential reading for all A Level English students. The website includes study guides, interactive online essay tools and revision aids.

www.yorknotes.com/revision-notes/alevel

YouTube

From revision tips to science experiments YouTube is a wealth of free material you can plunder for information. The quality varies but with a bit of digging around you can find some real gems from teacher-led instructional videos to vloggers and students posting real life tips.

Gojimo Tutor

Get personalised help with your A Level revision and homework via instant messaging 24/7, 365 days a year. Select a subject, type your question and you will be connected to a subject specialist who can walk you through your problem. You can even attach screenshots or diagrams. Available for maths and science with more subjects to follow soon. Available for iOS and Android. Free trial available for every student.

Gojimo Revision

The UK's leading revision app offering thousands of free revision quizzes all matched to your subject and exam board. You can track your progress through your subject, identify topics that need further work, and watch your scores improve over time. Gojimo covers every major A Level and Scottish Higher (also covers GCSE, IB and iGCSE). Available for free on iOS and Android via the app store.

Study Guides

Study Guides aren't new but they're still useful. At A Level there is still a wide range of choice, matched to your exam board and curriculum. Study Guides are an ideal way of revisiting each topic and reminding yourself of the key facts. The practice questions help consolidate your learning as you go along. You might want to try:

CGP: www.cgpbooks.co.uk/Student/books

Letts Revision Success: www.collins.co.uk/search?ssv=Letts+A+level+success

My Revision Notes: www.hoddereducation.co.uk/mrn

Podcasts

If you are an auditory learner then you will want to make use of the free podcasts that are available via iTunes. Some examples include:

- A Level and IB History Revision Guides By Mr Allsop History (iTunes)
- A Level Chemistry Revision By Chris Harris (iTunes)
- AS Geography Podcast By Tim Manson

There are loads more, simply do a search for the subject, topic and level you need. Other podcasts can be found on school or teacher websites – Google will help you track these down.

Find the resources that work for you. The choice is going to be a personal one, and guided by the type of learning style that suits you. You may benefit from using a variety of different tools in order to keep the subject fresh in your mind and help you stay focused during those long revision sessions. So next time you feel your concentration flagging don't just give up, try swapping to a different tool or technique instead.

Why Past Papers are the Best Way to Revise

There are lots of ways to revise that work but there's only one that gets close to actually sitting an exam: doing past exam papers from previous years. Here's why you should do as many as you can get your hands on.

You can practice your timing

Time management is perhaps the most important skill when it comes to sitting exams. If you don't set yourself a strict limit for how long you intend to spend on one section or another, you're going to find yourself running out of time with big chunks of the paper still to fill in. Past papers can train you to avoid this situation. By learning how long you need to dedicate to a particular section or kind of question, you can get an idea of how best to spend your time in the exam itself.

You'll learn the patterns

No matter what subject you are studying, this year's exam will share certain patterns and probably appear in a similar format to last year's. This gives you invaluable information about what to expect and what to prepare for: you'll know how many long questions to expect and how many short ones, how much reading or consideration you'll need to do, and a whole load of other useful knowledge.

You can identify your weaknesses

As you go through a past paper, keep a note of what topics you can answer questions on easily and which present more of a challenge. You should then alter your revision plan around this information: you'll get much more value from your time if you focus on your weaknesses rather than going over your strengths again.

They simulate the stress

Perhaps the most demanding part of actually sitting an exam is dealing with the stress of the day. You need to be mentally prepared to finish the paper in one sitting and with no access to your notes. The best way to recreate this is to make your revision process as close to the actual exam as you can. It may sometimes feel punishing, but past papers are by far the best way to do this.

You get to see how they're marked

If you're filling in a past paper, it's worth assessing how well you did with the mark scheme provided. This will show you what sort of answers and technique your markers will be looking for when they go through your paper. You can then try and mimic these techniques to ensure that the information you've gathered while revising can be put down on paper when the day comes.

You'll know what came up last year

It's never a good idea to miss something out of your revision schedule simply because it featured in last year's exam paper. If you're wrong, this can lead to the absolute disaster scenario of you being completely unable to answer a question. However, it is still worthwhile to see what was included and what was absent in recent years. It's worth putting extra time into a big or interesting topic that hasn't appeared in the last few exams.

How to Use Past Papers Effectively – Past papers are most useful when you answer them under exam conditions. This means sticking to the time limit, not checking your notes and marking yourself strictly. It can be tempting to go easy on yourself but this won't give you the full benefits that you could be getting from this style of revision.

Effective Exam Techniques

Hopefully your teachers will have given you lots of tips and plenty of opportunities to work through practice papers at school. Each subject is different but there are some general exam techniques that can help regardless of the type of exam you are taking. A Level exams can be long and intense so it is vital to get your technique up to speed.

1. **Read the question – then read it again and make sure you have really understood what it's asking for.** One of the biggest mistakes students make is to charge in and answer the question they think is being asked, and not the question that is actually being asked.
2. **Identify the questions that are worth the most marks, and spend the most time on them.** Spend less time on those questions worth fewer marks.
3. **Check and see if you can answer the questions out of order.** If you can, then write the answer to the questions you are most comfortable with first, leaving your weakest answer until last.
4. **Plan your answers in advance.** Write very brief notes to help you focus and ensure you don't forget anything vital.
5. **Keep calm and carry on!** It's normal to feel nervous and it's easy to panic, especially when you first turn over the paper. If you feel yourself getting worked up then take a few deep breaths, look back at your notes and carry on. Picking out the questions you feel most comfortable with will help you gain confidence at the start of the exam, and will help you stay calm throughout.
6. **If you are running out of time and have more than one question left to do, then just answer the first part of each of them.** You will pick up more marks if you half answer two different questions than fully answering one. Use bullet points to get across as many points as you can and don't feel restricted to writing a complete answer – the objective is to demonstrate your knowledge.
7. **Read your answers at the end.** Make sure what you have written is clear and you have included all the points you made in your planning notes.
8. **Never leave an exam early.** There is always something you can check again.
9. **Drink plenty of water – stay hydrated.** The act of sipping the water will also help keep you calm. Just don't overdo it – you don't want to spend the whole time fighting the urge to go to the loo.

YOUNGMINDS
The voice for young people's mental health and wellbeing

The Best Organisations to Help Your Health During Exams

Revision is stressful for everyone and can bring on a number of health issues, both mental and physical. If you are feeling stressed, don't suffer in silence. If you're struggling with your feelings, these organisations can help. This article is an excerpt from a magazine written by young people for young people inspired by YoungMinds Vs Stress at University. You can download it at www.youngminds.org.uk/assets/0002/7042/Uni_Zine.pdf

youngminds.org.uk

YoungMinds is the UK's leading charity committed to improving the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people. They run YoungMinds Vs, a mass movement of young people campaigning about bullying, access to counselling, early sexualisation and school and university stress.

Your GP

If you're struggling to cope, a good first step is to talk to your GP. It can help to write down what you've been going through before your visit.

studentminds.org.uk

Student Minds is the UK's student mental health charity, giving students the skills, knowledge and confidence to talk about their mental health and look out for their peers.

getconnected.org.uk / 0808 808 4994

The Mix (previously Get Connected) offer a free, confidential telephone and email helpline finding young people the best help whatever the problem.

samaritans.org / 116 123

Samaritans volunteers listen in confidence to anyone in any type of emotional distress, without judging or telling people what to do.

talktofrank.com / 0800 77 66 00

Confidential information and advice for anyone concerned about their own or someone else's drug or solvent misuse.

stonewall.org.uk

Use Stonewall's area database to find local lesbian, gay, and bisexual community groups, other generic services and gay friendly solicitors.

headmeds.org.uk

Straight talk on mental health medication. Look up your medication to find out about side effects and things you might not feel comfortable asking your GP about.

B-EAT youthline 0845 634 7650 / Fyp@b-eat.co.uk

Information, help and support for anyone affected by eating disorders.

thesite.org.uk

An online guide to life for 16 to 25 year-olds. It provides non-judgmental support and information on everything from sex and exam stress to debt and drugs.

youthaccess.org.uk

Youth Access is a national membership organisation for youth information, advice and counselling agencies. Provides information on youth agencies to people aged 11-25.

In an emergency

If you're about to harm yourself or have already done so, phone 999 or go to A&E and explain that you're at risk.