

Year 11  
**EXAM PREPARATION AND REVISION**

**What is revision?**

- Finding out what you know and understand (and, therefore, what you don't!)
- Building on what you know and understand
- Discovering what may have slipped your memory
- Considering ways of retaining information
- Practicing answers
- Preparing to show what you have learned

**Common pitfalls to effective revision**

- a) Leaving revision until the last minute
- b) Reading through notes over and over again
- c) Writing notes out over and over again
- d) Writing out essays and learning them off by heart
- e) Finding ways of putting off revision
- f) Starting to panic
- g) Finding revision boring
- h) Finding revision isolating
- i) Over-learning
- j) Too many responsibilities

Don't feel too alarmed if you recognise your own feelings or actions in any of the above pitfalls. Many students find revision boring precisely because they do employ some of these methods. Consider ways of improving upon these statements, then check your responses with those shown below.

## **Avoiding the pitfalls**

- a) Make a revision plan and stick to it. Start revising early.
- b) You need to be more active with your notes. Look at past exam papers and look in your notes for material related to the questions. You may have to do some extra reading to supplement you existing information in order to have a comprehensive resource.
- c) Reduce your notes to half the current amount. After two or three weeks, reduce your condensed notes again into key points on index cards or post-its. The process of reduction will help you assimilate information and the resulting cards will provide you with a handy revision resource.
- d) Learning essays is dangerous; you'll be tempted to reproduce them in the examination even when the question is different. It's more sensible to use your notes and past papers to construct a range of essay/ assignment plans.
- e) If you plan properly you won't need to put off revising. Start early enough to integrate revision into your lifestyle rather than letting it take over. Ensure the plan has sufficient breaks.
- f) Rather than assuming that 'passing the exam' is the goal, take a step back and incorporate smaller, achievable goals into your revision plan.
- g) You don't need to force yourself; you should encourage yourself with goals, breaks and rewards.
- h) Work in shorter spells. Vary the topics and the revision methods on your plan. Spend some time working with friends; for example, write 'mock' answers to time and mark each other's work or quiz each other problem areas.
- i) Make use of short periods of time such as bus journeys by always carrying small amounts of work or your index cards with you.
- j) It's possible to put yourself under so much pressure that you are in danger of 'burning out' before the exam. Try to keep things in perspective. Keep checking what you have learnt. Reduce your material to memory triggers. Eat and sleep properly.
- k) Finally eat, rest and continue to exercise.