



How to help your child during exam season



GOFAL - GREAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL TO LEARN

Yn Ysgol Uwchradd Llanidloes rwyf ti'n werthfawr... At Llanidloes High School you are valued...

...heriau neu anghenion...challenges and needs

...grefydd neu gred...religion or belief

...ddiddordebau neu ffordd o fyw...hobbies and lifestyle

...hil neu rywledeb...race or sexuality

...oedran neu ryw...age or sex

beth bynnag yw dy...
whatever your...

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Introduction

Over the coming year, your child will be sitting public examinations. This can be a stressful time for both children and parents. So, we have produced this booklet to help you help them.

Like you, we want your child to leave school with the best possible results. This will help them successfully take the next step in their chosen education, training or employment pathway. By working together, we know your child can achieve results of which they'll be proud for the rest of their lives.

If your child intends to go to university, their GCSE results will form a very important block of evidence in the application process. For example, a number of medical courses ask for five or more A* grades. Most universities ask for at least a grade C in English and mathematics. All competitive courses - such as medicine, veterinary medicine and dentistry - and universities such as Oxford and Cambridge, will expect excellent GCSE grades. Similarly, if your child aspires to access a college course to pursue a vocational route, or one of the increasingly popular apprenticeships, there will be minimum entry criteria that must be met. Moreover, students who enter Sixth Form without at least a grade C in English or mathematics GCSE will be supported to re-sit them successfully.

So, to help all of our exam students, we have planned wide-ranging support.

First, **mock examinations** and the completion of past papers are important. We will support your child to familiarise themselves with examination conditions and timings.

Second, all exam pupils receive **revision skills training** bespoke to their subject choices.

Third, pupils who are finding the stress of completing exams particularly acute, will have the opportunity to attend **Kooth 'stress-busting' sessions**.

Fourth, all subject teachers will upload **revision materials**, past exam papers, mark schemes and examination tips to your child's class 'Team'.

Throughout revision season, your child will be guided through this material and supported with their revision.

Fifth, every child will be assigned a **pastoral/academic mentor** by the end of the spring term in preparation for the busy summer schedule.

Sixth, we carefully review predicted grades and, where students appear to be underperforming, we create **tailored support plans**. For example, your child may be offered the opportunity to complete a non-examined - and, consequently, less stressful - GCSE equivalent qualification such as I-Achieve's Equality and Diversity course.



Seventh, we share resources from the WJEC exam board. These include:

Key dates and timetables: https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/administration/key-dates-and-timetables/#tab_0 Your child will be provided with their individual timetable.

WJEC's Student Support: <https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/student-support/> This includes everything your child needs to know, from revision to results! You'll find a range of useful information including articles, top tips, practical advice and much more.

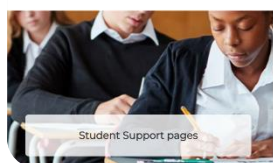
WJEC's Revision Tips: <https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/student-support/revision-tips/> Your child can reignite their revision and get exam ready, with the exam board's top tips, blogs, and handy downloads.

WJEC's Revision Resources: <https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/student-support/revision-resources/> The exam board has been busy creating a wealth of digital resources, tools and materials to support your child's learning of their qualifications. These are perfect for helping with revision and continuous learning.

Wellbeing guidance: <https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/student-support/your-wellbeing/> Noticing what's going on in our minds and bodies is an important skill for improving and maintaining our mental health. We should all take time to check in with our thoughts and feelings regularly. To help your child stay positive and motivated, WJEC have developed a range of blogs, articles and guides to promote an emotionally healthy approach to learning. These are jam-packed with tips and tricks to support your child – and to help them progress to their next step.



Learners' guide to advance information: <https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/summer-exams-2023-everything-you-need-to-know/advance-information-summaries/> To help your child focus their revision for this summer's exams, WJEC have published Advance Information for some qualifications on their website.



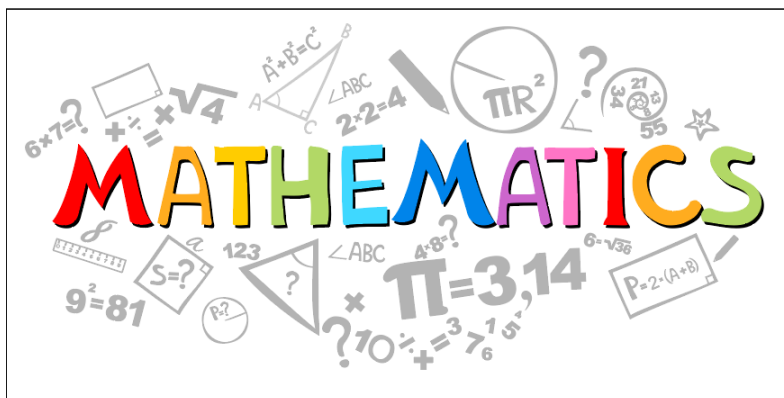
WJEC's Instagram page for students: <https://www.instagram.com/wjecforstudents/> Your child can also get loads of useful information on WJEC's Instagram for Students page.

If you are concerned about your child at any point during the revision or GCSE examination period, then please contact us. Staff are here to help!

Maths exams info

When will my child sit their maths GCSE?

Most pupils will sit their GCSE Maths-Numeracy in November of Year 11 (and will have a full GCSE in Maths-Numeracy at this point). These pupils will then sit GCSE Maths in May/June of Year 11 (this is a second full GCSE in Maths).



Pupils who are not entered for GCSE Maths-Numeracy in November of Year 11 will sit both Maths GCSE exams in May/June of Year 11. Those pupils who sat their Numeracy exam in the November can re-sit in May/June.

What exams will they sit? How do staff decide which tier my child will be entered for? Does this limit the grade they can achieve?

There are two papers for each maths GCSE - one non-calculator and one calculator. Therefore, there are four exams in total. There are three tiers for both GCSEs:

- Pupils sitting Higher Tier can achieve grades A*-C
- Pupils sitting Intermediate Tier can achieve grades B-E
- Pupils sitting Foundation Tier can achieve grades D-G

Tier of entry is determined by a careful review of pupils' prior performance, including classwork, mock exams and past papers. Staff use this wide-ranging performance data to choose the tier of entry that will maximise each pupil's performance.

If my child is entered for a lower tier paper, but works very hard and makes strong progress, can the tier be changed? When would that decision be made?

Staff track pupil progress carefully throughout the year. Where assessment evidence suggests a pupil would benefit from the opportunity to sit a higher tier, they do so. Also, if pupils do well on Foundation Tier in November, they may re-sit at Intermediate Tier in the summer. Similarly, pupils who perform well in the Intermediate Tier may be moved to Higher Tier in the summer. In both cases there is additional content to cover and this requires commitment from the pupil to complete the extra preparatory work.

What support will my child receive to successfully complete their exams?

Maths teachers offer lunchtime revision sessions in the run-up to exams, including past paper work. Helpful revision materials and support materials are shared with all examinees.

Who can I speak to if I have other questions?

In the first instance, please contact your child's maths teacher. You can also contact Dr Creasey (Learning Manager for Maths), Ms Hillidge (Assistant Learning Manager for Maths) or Mrs Jerman (Senior Link for Maths) using office@llanidloes-hs.powys.sch.uk or call 01686 412289.

English exams info



When will my child sit their English GCSE?

GCSE English Language – Year 11

- Unless your child is new to the school, they will already have completed 10% of their English Language GCSE.
- Preparation for the Year 11 group discussion begins on Monday 13th November 2023 with recording taking place the following week. This is a non-examined assessment (NEA) and will make up 10% of your child's grade.
- On Thursday 23rd May 2024, Year 11 will sit their untiered reading and writing exam (proof-reading, exposition essay narrative or description). This will make up 40% of your child's overall grade.
- On Thursday 16th June 2024, Year 11 sit another untiered reading and writing exam (two non-fiction writing tasks such as an article, talk, guide, formal letter, informal letter, report, review, travel writing). This will make up 40% of your child's overall grade.

GCSE English Language – Year 10

Preparation for the Year 10 Individual Presentation non-examined assessment (NEA) will begin on Friday 28th June with recording taking place during the week beginning 8th July 2024. This will make up 10% of your child's grade.

GCSE English Literature – Year 11 (sets 1a and 1b)

- During the autumn term, these pupils complete a non-examined assessment on poetry comparison. This is worth 12.5% of their overall grade.
- On Wednesday 10th January 2024, Year 11 complete an exam on 'Of Mice and Men' by John Steinbeck and Unseen Poetry (this only applies to those re-sitting their Year 10 exam). This is worth 35% of their overall grade.
- On Monday 20th May 2024, Year 11 complete an exam on 'Inspector Calls' by J B Priestley and 'Heroes' by Robert Cormier. This worth 40% of your child's overall grade.

GCSE English Literature – Year 10 (set 1)

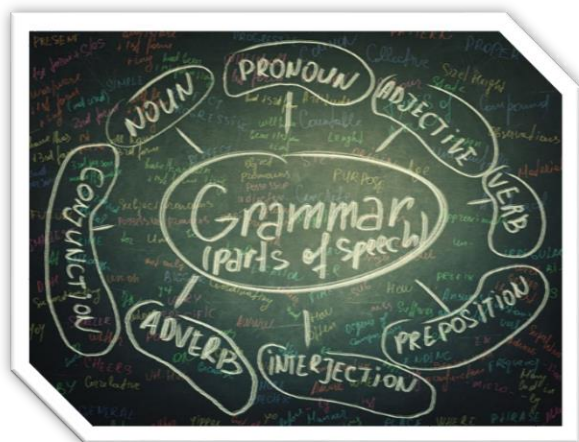
- During the autumn term, these pupils complete a non-examined assignment on Shakespeare that is worth 12.5% of their overall grade.
- On Monday 13th May 2024, these Year 10 pupils complete an exam on 'Of Mice and Men' by John Steinbeck and Unseen Poetry. This is worth 35% of your child's overall grade.

How do staff decide which tier my child will be entered for? Does this limit the grade they can achieve?

There are no entry tiers of entry in GCSE English Language. Every child sits the same papers. A minority of pupils are entered for English Literature GCSE. This examination is tiered:

- **Pupils sitting English Literature Higher Tier are able to achieve grades A*-D**
- **Pupils sitting English Literature Foundation Tier are able to achieve grades C-G**

Tiers of entry are decided based on each pupil's progress in class, assessment evidence and mock examination results. If a pupil sits Foundation for one unit, it is possible that they can sit Higher for the other unit. The final deadline for summer entries is usually in March, and for January entries the deadline is usually in November.



What support will my child receive to successfully complete their exams?

All pupils are offered additional support sessions in the run up to non-examined assessments and each examination. They also receive wide-ranging revision support materials. The department operates an open door policy so that pupils can drop in for support at any time throughout the day during their preparatory period for examinations or non-examined assessments.

- Year 11 – English Language GCSE
After school revision sessions for Unit 2 and Unit 3 will begin February / March 2024
- Year 11 – English Literature GCSE
A weekly revision session will begin in October.

Who can I speak to if I have other questions?

In the first instance, please contact your child's English teacher. You can also contact Ms Williams (Learning Manager for Languages, Literacy and Communication), Mr O'Brien (Numeracy Lead) or Mr Owen (Senior Link for English) using office@llanidloes-hs.powys.sch.uk or call 01686 412289.

Welsh exams info

When will my child sit their Welsh GCSE?

Year 11: Welsh First Language

- During week beginning 23rd October 2023, these pupils will complete Task 1: Individual spoken presentation based on research (15% of your child's grade).
- In December 2023 (date to be confirmed), these pupils will complete Task 2: Group discussion on a topic set by the exam board (15% of your child's grade).
- In May 2024, first language students will complete their reading and writing exam (reading comprehension, extended writing). This is worth 35% of the grade.
- In June 2024, first language students complete Unit 3: reading and writing exam (reading comprehension, extended writing). This is worth 35% of the grade.



Year 10: Welsh First Language:

- During Year 10 (dates TBC), pupils will complete Task 1: Individual spoken presentation based on research This worth 15% of your child's grade.

Year 11: Welsh Second Language

- In April 2024, pupils complete their Unit 1 oral exam. This is a group discussion about a DVD clip and is worth 25% of your child's grade.
- In April 2024, pupils also complete their Unit 2 oral exam. This is a group discussion about a topic chosen by the exam board and is also worth 25% of your child's overall grade. (N.B. 11 set 1 sat this exam in April 2022).
- In May 2024, pupils complete their Unit 3 reading and writing exam. This involves reading comprehension, extended writing, translation and proof reading and is worth 25% of your child's grade.
- In June 2024, pupils complete their Unit 4 reading and writing exam (reading comprehension and extended writing). This is worth 25% of your child's grade.

Year 10: Welsh Second Language

- In April 2024, pupils in Year 10 complete their Unit 1 or Unit 2 oral exam which is worth 25% of the overall grade.

Are there tiers of entry?

All Welsh First Language exams are untiered.

What support will my child receive to successfully complete their exams?

After school or lunchtime revision session are offered to pupils in both Years 10 and 11 in Welsh First and Second Language. Resources are regularly posted on Teams in order to support self-study.

Who can I speak to if I have other questions?

Please contact Mrs Crawford (Learning Manager for Literacy, Languages and Communication) using office@llanidloes-hs.powys.sch.uk or call 01686 412289.

Science exams info

What qualifications are taken by pupils?

The Science department enter most learners for the GCSE Double Award Science. These pupils are awarded two GCSEs. A minority of pupils are entered for the GCSE Applied Science Single Award qualification.



The Double Award course consists of seven units across the two years. Two units of Biology, two units of Chemistry, two units of Physics and a practical assessment task. Each Science unit has a weighing of 15% and the practical task is worth 10% towards the overall GCSE grading.

When will my child sit their science GCSE?

Double Award GCSE - Year 10

- In June of Year 10, pupils are entered for the first unit exam in each Science. Each exam lasts 1 hour and 15 minutes and the papers are marked out of 60 in both foundation and higher tier.
- In recent years, in January/February, Year 10 pupils have also been entered for the practical assessment. However, this depends on the suitability of the practical task.

Double Award GCSE - Year 11

- In May in Year 11, pupils are entered for the second unit exam in each Science. These exams also last 1 hour and 15 minutes and are marked out of 60 in both foundation and higher tier.
- In the January/February, pupils are usually entered for the practical assessment. This consists of two practical tasks, which are chosen by the science department from a list provided by the exam board. The task involves one hour carrying out the practical, and one hour completing a written exam paper under exam conditions. The practical assessment is single tier meaning all students will sit the same paper.



Single Award - Applied Science

- In January/February, these Year 10 pupils are entered for the practical assessment. This contributes 10% to their overall grade. If they underperform, they may be re-entered for the assessment in Year 11.
- In November of Year 11, pupils carry out a Task Based Assessment selected by the teacher from the list provided by the exam board. This is worth 20% of the final grade. The task consists of two activities. The first activity lasts 3 hours (broken down into class sessions that match the school day). The second activity lasts one hour and is carried out under exam conditions.
- In the summer of Year 11, pupils sit two examinations. Both exams last for 1 hour and 30 minutes. The Unit 1 exam is worth 40% and Unit 2 exam 30% of the final grade.

Is there tiered entry? How do staff decide which tier my child will be entered for? Will this decision affect the grade my child can achieve?

Exams are tiered.

- If your child is entered for the Foundation Tier, the highest grade they can achieve in the written paper is a C. However, their overall grading could be higher than a C. For example, in recent years, pupils taking the Foundation Tier have attained BB and BC grades overall. This is because final grading reflects the number of Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) your child has attained in all examinations throughout the two years.
- Higher Tier pupils are able to achieve an A*.



When deciding the right tier of entry for your child, science staff always seek to maximise each child's performance. To do this, they consider wide-ranging performance data including: internal assessment evidence, tracking data and Year 10 examination performance.

If my child is entered for a lower tier paper, but works very hard and makes strong progress, can they be entered for a higher tier paper to aim for a higher grade? When would that decision be made?

If a pupil excels in Year 10 at the Foundation Tier, they may have the opportunity to sit the Higher Tier in Year

11, and vice versa if they struggled with the Higher Tier.

In general, pupils in set 1 are entered for the higher tier, and pupils in other sets, including the groups studying the Single Award Applied Science qualification, are entered for Foundation tier.

If pupils underperform in any of their unit exams, they may be asked to resit that unit the following year. Before making this decision, staff carefully consider the pupil's progress and discuss next steps with each pupil. Failing an exam does not automatically mean pupils resit.

The final decision concerning examination entries is made before the Easter holidays and takes into account wide-ranging assessment evidence.

What support will my child receive to successfully complete their exams?

Leading up to the exams, learners will be offered revision guides, either written by the exam board or by our staff, as well as past papers. Staff hold revision sessions at lunchtime and after school before in the lead up to the exams. Lesson resources and revision materials are made available in Teams to enable flexible access.

Who can I speak to if I have other questions (contact details)?

Please contact Mr Eley-Fitzgerald (Learning Manager for Science) using office@llanidloes-hs.powys.sch.uk or call 01686 412289.

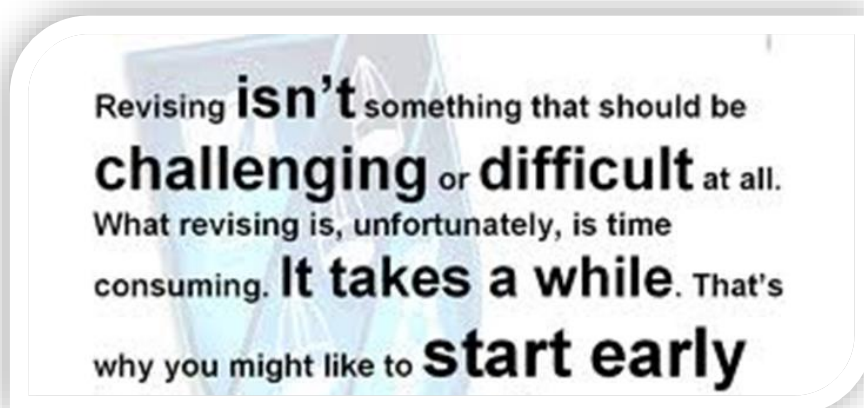
Revising

If your child suggests they do not have any homework, please gently remind them that they can always revise! All the information they need will be available on their class Team and/or in their subject revision guide. They can make use of the WJEC resources detailed above. Making revision cards and notes on each topic can also be very effective.



Encourage them to explain the topics they have covered in their revision in as much detail as possible. **'What did you learn today?' 'What past paper questions have you been given on that topic?' 'Are you able to explain your answers to me?'**

You could try giving small rewards while they are revising, not just one big reward at the end for a good set of results. Look for signs that they are getting overly anxious and encourage them to talk about how they're feeling.



Each student will be supported to create weekly revision timetables. This will help them approach revision season in a **realistic, ambitious** way. Consider asking for a copy of their revision timetable and supportively monitoring their progress and discipline in sticking to it.

You might like to suggest that their favourite TV programs are viewed 'on demand' so your child's revision schedule is not interrupted.

Encourage them to take short breaks. They will likely appreciate having their favourite snacks available as a reward after a good stint of revision!

You know your child better than anyone. Are they easily distracted by their phones, tablets and game consoles? If so, given what is stake, it would be reasonable to insist that you look after these items during the various revision slots. Social media addiction is many pupils' greatest barrier to success.



Hints for an ideal revision area



Surroundings

Does your child have a quiet learning environment where they can make undisturbed progress with their revision? If you have a busy household, this question is especially pertinent.

The environment in which your child revises can make a difference to their progress. It is ideal if they have access to a quiet, well organised space that they can set aside as a revision area. Studying will also be easier if your child has a desk or a table.

If possible, consider avoiding using an area that they associate with relaxation, such as their bed or a settee.

Try and make sure that they are not interrupted. This may be a real challenge if they have noisy siblings and will likely require your supportive intervention.

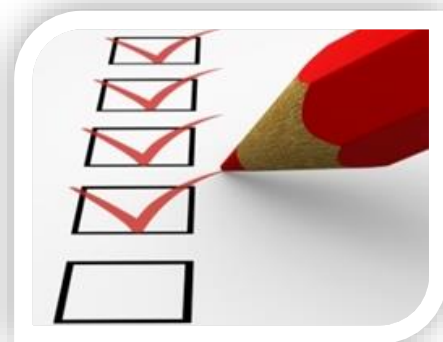
Revision timetable

Encourage your child to start revising as early as possible. They could begin to plan their revision during the half term break. They need to understand that they will not reach their full potential if they leave it too late. In the past, less motivated pupils have started no more than a few days before their actual exam. Getting all the materials ready, devising a plan and then launching off with their first revision session, is arguably the hardest part of the journey to success. So, feel free to provide whatever encouragement they need to get started.

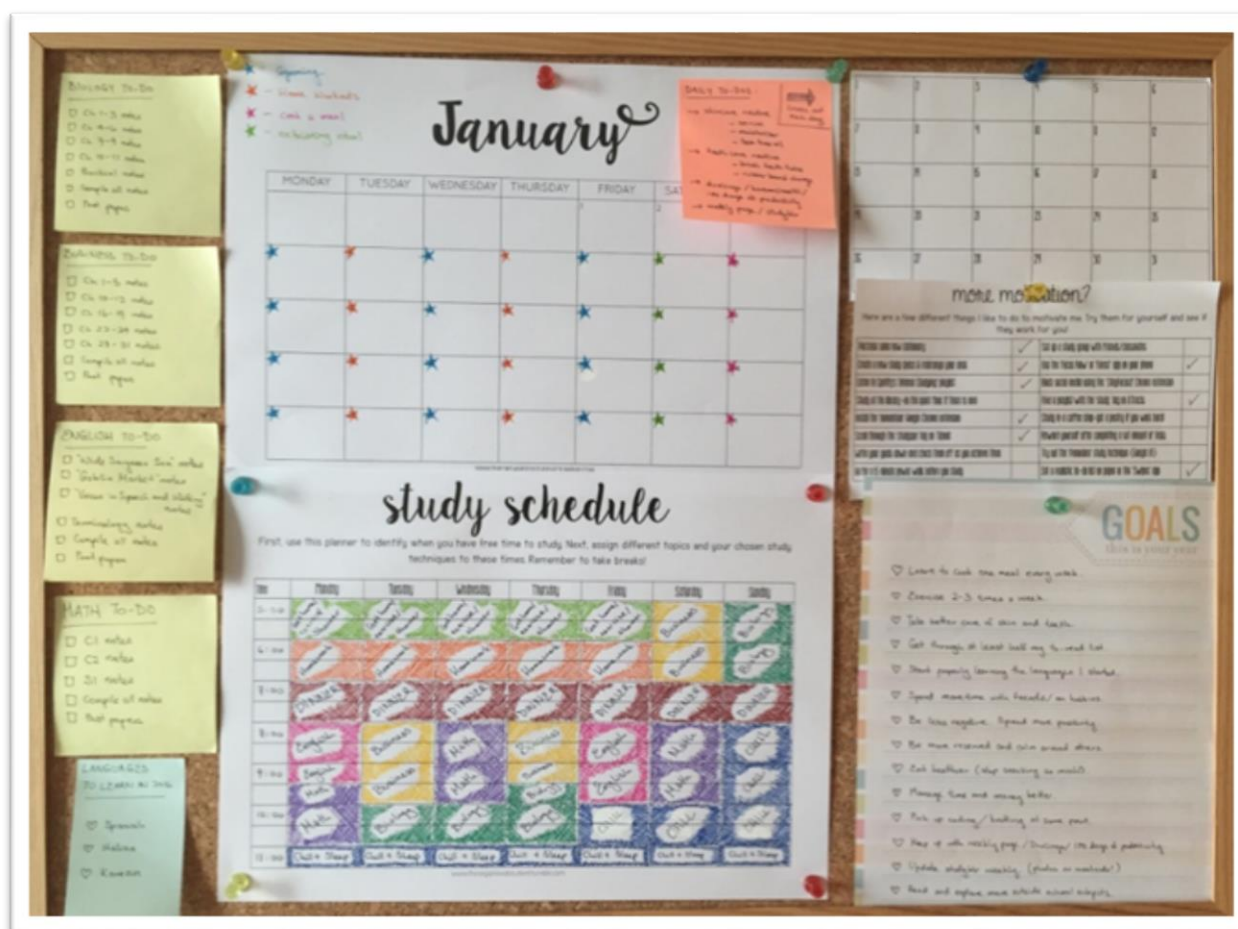
When supporting your child as they plan their revision timetable, consider discussing how to balance time spent revising, and time spent on other pursuits. Naturally, a degree of flexibility may be needed in the weeks following. For example, an unforeseen event might crop up necessitating the temporary suspension of the revision timetable. When this happens, consider encouraging your child to make up the time elsewhere during the week. This will hopefully help ensure deviation from the revision timetable doesn't become habitual, rendering the plan redundant. It is worth discussing how your child will need to be disciplined as there will certainly be times – possibly quite often – when they don't want to revise at the agreed times. Consider pointing out that if they wait until they are in the mood, they will get further behind and feel even less like starting. Try to build in some catching up time in case they fall behind due to unforeseen circumstances or moments of weakness. These catch up slots can be used as free time if they are on schedule.



We encourage you to sit alongside your child and help them work out a realistic revision timetable. They will receive an exemplar from the school which includes plenty of rest time and slots for sports, hobbies, friends, faith and family. Ideally, the timetable will include actual times of the day rather than just general time periods like 'morning session'. It would be helpful if they could insert the topics from each subject's topic list. This is provided by their teachers.

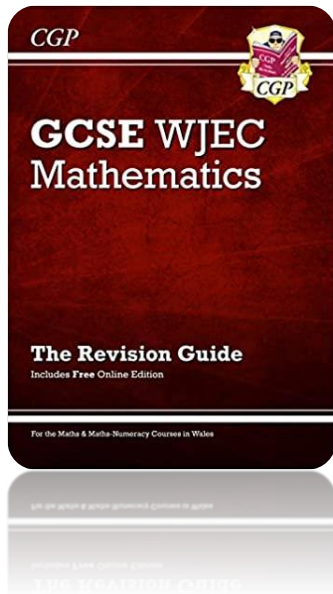


On the one hand, reviewing the topic lists can serve as a wake-up call that provides an indication of the amount of information to be covered. On the other hand, it can be comforting to have a finite tick list that shows the end is in sight. As they progress through the list, this can be an excellent motivator. If they do fall behind, they may need reassurance, encouragement and support to get back on track.



Above is an example of a well-planned revision schedule. Each day is broken up into manageable revision slots. The post-it notes provide reminders of key aspects for the revision of particular subjects. If they have difficulty getting up in the morning to get started, consider starting their day with a treat such as a special breakfast.

Out of view is the subject topic list for each subject through which the child is working, and the revision materials themselves (e.g. a revision guide for each subject, past papers for practice and mark schemes for self-assessment).



Revision guides

Your child's teachers will have helped them select a suitable revision guide. These are very often ordered and distributed by the school. If you want to purchase additional revision guides, please make sure that they are up-to-date and cover the correct exam board.

Your child's teachers will provide plenty of free revision resources. They will also be able to advise you if you are considering purchasing additional resources. There is a particular risk this year that well-meaning parents purchase revision guides that cover material we know will not come up in the examination. So, please listen carefully to guidance from subject staff in the area of revision materials.

Revision technique

Just reading over the work is beneficial. However, this is usually not enough to enable strong recall in exam conditions.

Your child has received expert training from an external provider to help them develop a revision technique that works for them. Encourage your child to experiment with different approaches to find out which method they prefer.

Everybody needs to:

- Complete past paper questions (teachers will supply plenty of these via Teams or in person). This is only useful if your child actually uses the mark scheme to assess and correct their answers, or receives feedback from their teacher on their responses. This is one of the most valuable methods of revision.
- Make notes on subject content in a way they find memorable. For example, after reading through the revision materials on a particular topic, they may wish to create a mind map for particular concepts and content.
- Alternatively, they may find it helpful to create acronyms of key words that relate to wider sections of subject specific knowledge. There are many different ways to revise. On the pages below are examples of approaches that work well for different pupils.

Listeners

Some students like to hear the teacher explain things. They also find it helpful to summarise out loud, or learn by repeat things to themselves.



These students could try the following revision strategies:

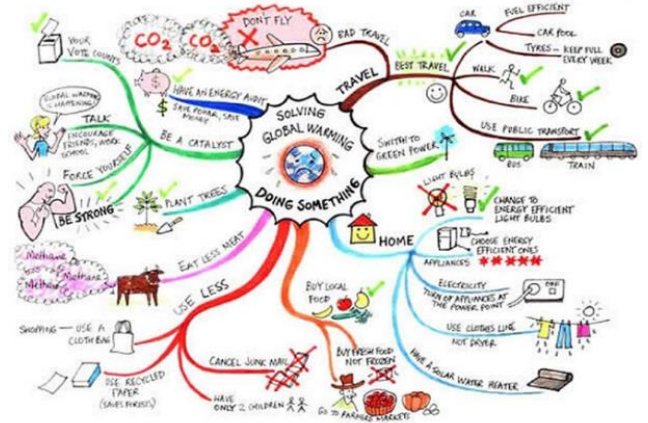
- Reading their notes out aloud repeatedly.
- Create rhymes, raps, chants and songs to help information stick.
- Remember lists by using mnemonics e.g. ‘ripping out your grannie’s brains is violent’ for the colours of the rainbow. The funnier they are the easier they will be to remember.
- Telling you about what they have learned without looking at their notes is excellent. Do not worry if you do not understand what they are saying. Only correct them if you are completely sure.
- Recording notes and playing them back on their phone or another digital device until they are able to recall and express the information verbally.
- Close their eyes when they are listening so that they are only using that sense.
- Watching video clips about the topic. For example, there are numerous video resources on BBC bitesize and GCSE Pod. However, they avoid spending hours looking for clips.



Lookers

Some students tend to learn best through pictures, learning maps, diagrams etc. These students could try the following revision strategies:

- Making and displaying mind maps, posters and spider diagrams.



- Pick out key words with highlighters. However, highlighting everything does not work! Also, take care that the colour is not too dark that it reduces readability.

- Create visual displays of key words, facts and text in strategic places – bedroom wall, the mirror on back of loo door, and so on!
- Use index cards or post it notes to highlight key points
- Use carefully selected videos, TV programmes or plays depicting texts being studied (teachers' guidance on visual content would be beneficial).



Doers

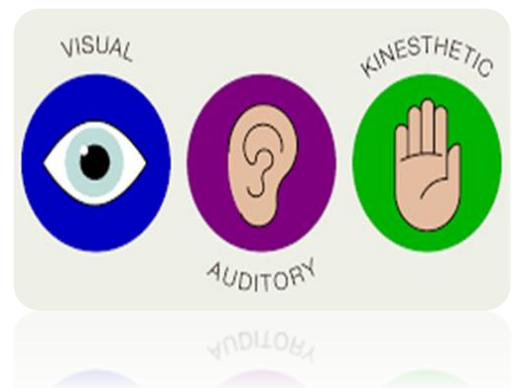
Some students tend to learn best through activities such as experiments, card sorts, matching activities, and so on

These students could try the following revision strategies:

- Use movement when they are revising – walk around studying mind maps pinned to the wall rather than doing so at the desk.
- Writing out what they have learned and checking for missing information.
- Create a 'cheat sheet' that summarises information in a visually memorable way
- Correctly order revision information on post it notes (take a photo on their phone to ensure they can check the accuracy of their attempt). Try again in a few days time.

Summary

The most effective revision method varies from person to person. At the outset, encourage your child to try out different strategies to find the method(s) that enable to recall the most information in a time efficient way (building a scale model of a Spanish galleon may be memorable, but not the best use of finite revision time!) Some people are visual learners, other prefer listening, and others need to be active wherever possible. Using a variety of strategies may make revision more interesting, but the most important question is what strategy is most effective at enabling them to retain a large quantity of information.



Revision notes

When making revision notes they should be encouraged to remember the following:

Large is better than
 Funny is better than dull
Colour is better than drab
 Strange may be better than normal
 Cheeky may be more memorable than polite

Attendance

Please help ensure maximum attendance at school. Research suggests that 17 days missed from school over the course of a year - approximately one day per fortnight - equates to a GCSE grade dropped in each subject.



Ask about revision sessions that the teachers offer in their free time and, again, encourage attendance. Please do not agree if your child asks, 'May I stay at home to revise as we are not doing anything in school, we have finished everything now?'. The last few weeks before the exams are crucially important and experienced teachers make every lesson count. A lot of consolidation and past paper work is completed at this time, so attendance is crucial.

Subject information

Different subjects are assessed in different ways. Some are more coursework based and others are assessed through examinations. Teachers will be letting you know:

- Precisely which qualification your child is completing, the exam board and coursework details
- Deadlines and the value of each aspect of the assessment
- Recommended revision guides, past papers, mark schemes and subject-specific examination techniques
- Equipment needed over and above the basics

When it is not going well

Some young people may be prone to an all or nothing 'catastrophic' approach to difficulties.

NEVER EVER
EVER
GIVE UP!



Their response may involve the following train of thought, or something similar: 'I've fallen behind, nothing is sinking in, there too much to learn, what's the point...I'm giving up.'

A few pupils may become disengaged and lack motivation as the exam pressure builds. They may start to project blame out of fear of failure. We would encourage you to listen, take their concerns seriously, try not to overreact, and share precise concerns with staff so we can work together on providing the support they need to regain a proper perspective and make positive steps towards getting back on track.

If you want to ask a teacher something specific about revision, please remember that they spend nearly all their time teaching and assessing. So, it may not be possible to respond immediately, but we aim to reply within three days. The best way to make contact is to e-mail the school (office@llanidloes-hs.powys.sch.uk) or phone the office. All staff are committed to working closely with you to help your child succeed.



In addition, if discouragement is taking hold, consider reminding your child of times when they have overcome difficult situations in the past. We will join you in trying to promote a positive outlook, high levels of motivation and practical solutions to revision stress.

Health

You know your child better than anybody, so watch out for signs of stress:

- Not sleeping;
- Overtired;
- Poor appetite;
- Loss of interest in things that they enjoy;
- Headaches or unexplained aches;
- Irritability and angry episodes.

Some stress is to be expected and may help them successfully tackle their exams. If you feel that they are overly stressed, encourage activities that counter stress. For example, gentle exercise, eating healthily and getting some fresh air are highly beneficial throughout revision season.



On the eve of the exams

The night before the exam, try and ensure that they have a good night's sleep (about 7 hours) and that they are up early enough to eat breakfast.

If they feel ill on the eve of the exam, try to reassure them that a headache, upset stomach or feeling sick is very probably down to nerves. A bit of adrenalin is good for them to perform at their best.

Please inform the school if something has happened that might have upset them. For example, let us know if a close family member has passed away. The exam board will sometimes take such circumstances into consideration.



Equipment



Make sure that your child has all the correct equipment and that it is in a clear plastic pencil case (a clear plastic bag will be acceptable).

- At least 2 pens with black ink. Having a pen that they are familiar with but still has plenty of ink in it is better than having a new pen
- At least 2 pencils that are sharp at the start of the exam
- A 30cm ruler that is in good condition
- An eraser (rubber) and pencil sharpener
- Pale highlighters to identify key words in questions (optional)
- A scientific calculator. Check the rules as they must not be taken into some exams. It is better to have it in their bag than leave it at home in case it is needed



Specialist equipment that is needed for some exams.

- A protractor and compass
- Colouring pencils (not felt pens).

On the day

Make sure that they are at school at the correct time on the right day! If they arrive more than 30 minutes late after the published start time, they might not be allowed to take the exam. Remind them about switching off their phone and checking it is not accidentally left in their pocket. Remind them to go to the toilet before the exam. If they feel ill on the morning of the exam, remind them that a headache, upset stomach or feeling sick is very probably down to nerves. We can arrange for them to be in a room within close proximity to a toilet if they have a seriously upset stomach.

Once they are in the exam room and start working, they will often forget that they were not feeling well. However, if you feel that they are not going to be well enough to take the examination, you will need to get a doctor's note. In most cases, there will not be another chance to take the examination until the following year and they will not be awarded a grade.

If they are taken seriously ill and the exam is part of several assessments, the exam board may be able to apply exceptional circumstances. As soon as possible, provide us with all relevant information, including medical certification, and we will alert the examination board.

After the exam, we are sure you will ask them how it went, but we suggest you don't insist on a long post-mortem unless they want it.

Your child may value being reassured that many students remember the questions they were unable to complete but are less able to recall questions they answered correctly.

And finally...

We are sure that, by working closely together, we will be able to support your child to examination success this summer.

