



Drawing up your revision timetable

There's plenty of time available...if you manage it well!

Year 11
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Why bother?

There are many good reasons for using revision timetables:

- To avoid a last minute rush as exams get too close
- To set up a routine and discipline yourself
- To share out revision time between subjects
- To ensure all topics are covered
- To spread out / keep up with your revision
- To get the right balance between revision and leisure time
- To avoid wasting time trying to decide what to do for each revision session

Getting started

- Start early – even if it means you only do a few hours a week in the early weeks
- Start early – it's hugely encouraging to see you ticking off topics that you have covered
- Start early – you see yourself making progress, which puts a smile on your face and helps keep anxiety at bay!

What goes wrong with revision timetables?

There are 3 main reasons why timetables don't work:

- They are drawn up to cover too many weeks ahead
 - They are drawn up in too much detail
 - They are over-ambitious and unrealistic
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- Timetables can work for everyone. A good one strikes the right balance between flexibility and routine.
 - They are not meant to tie you down in a rigid way but can be an excellent tool to guide you through your revision period.
 - Most students never stick exactly to their timetable and when you don't, it doesn't mean that your timetable isn't working. It is only a guide. Allow yourself some flexibility and don't worry if you don't do everything you planned to do.

Drawing up a timetable

- Divide up your day
- For example; Morning 9-1, Afternoon 1-5, Evening 5-9
- One hour chunks
- Find a way that suits you – Early starter or finish later? Most people are more effective if they start earlier!

What steps do I follow when drawing up a revision timetable?

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| Step 1 | Draw up a trial timetable lasting 1 week |
| Step 2 | Work through your trial timetable |
| Step 3 | Review your trial timetable |
| Step 4 | Draw up a timetable for the next week and work through it |
| Step 5 | Review the timetable |
| Step 6 | Draw up your next timetable |

Repeat steps 5 and 6 until you have sat your last exam
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Drawing up a trial timetable

- Make a list of all the subjects in which you are taking exams.
- Give more time to the subjects/topics that you find the hardest.
- Your first timetable should only cover the first week. This is a trial period to see how much revision you can realistically do.
- Enter all your commitments such as lessons, revision classes, time to complete homework and - very importantly - time to relax.
- When putting your timetable together, consider:
 - Leave time for leisure activities
 - Balance revision time between your subjects
 - Space out the revision time for each subject over the week
 - Vary the subjects revised on each day
- Pin up your timetable in a prominent place in your room.

Drawing up your next timetable

- At the end of each week carry out a quick review and draw up a timetable for the next week
- Repeat this cycle until your last exam
- Always stick up your timetables where you can see them!

Organising your revision sessions

You'll learn most if you use your revision time effectively!

Where do I start? Making a topic checklist

- For each subject, make a list of the major topics you have covered. This is a kind of route map showing you a path for your revision. Ask your teachers for help on this. Getting the exam board's specification for each subject can help.
- For each subject, look at the topics and decide what order you want to tackle them in. Pick a topic you like or find easy to start with, as this boosts your confidence. You don't have to revise the topics in the same order you were taught them. However, make sure you spend most time on the subjects/topics you struggle with.
- Many students avoid the topics they don't like...and get a nasty shock when they come up on the exam!
- Pin up your topic checklists in your bedroom or keep them in an easily accessible place.
- After each revision session, tick off the topic from your checklist (but only if you are happy that you have covered it adequately). This will help you to see the progress you are making and help you feel more in control.

Organising your time

Getting the basics right

- Set a definite time when you will start and finish each revision session and stick to it
- Keep revision sessions to a reasonable length. Between 1-3 hours is about right.
- Try to work in good light. You might get a headache if the light you work in is poor.
- Some students find that they revise best in one place and feel that working in lots of different places is distracting. Others prefer the variety of working in different places.
- Most people are at their best in the morning. Try working on difficult topics in the morning when your mind is fresh.
- Don't listen to music when you are trying to revise. It is much more likely to distract than help. Exams are silent!
- When you have a break, try playing one of your favourite tracks!

Improving your concentration

- If you find it difficult to concentrate for long periods of time, start with short sessions and gradually build up to longer sessions
- Make sure you have regular breaks. How often and how long these breaks are will depend on how long you are revising for, the material you are revising, the time of day and your own concentration span. A good guide is that for every hour you work, have a break of ten minutes. You may find that a break after every 20 or 30 minutes works best for you.
- Experiment with your breaks; be flexible and find out what works best for you.
- You may find it helps with your concentration if you vary the topic or the subject during each session.
- Take full advantage of school revision sessions. This is particularly helpful when it is difficult to get peace and quiet at home.
- Walking around whilst reading or testing yourself can help concentration.
- Just getting up and moving around or simply changing your sitting position can sometimes help concentration.

Even more ideas...

- Speaking out loud can help the information to sink in, and stop your mind from drifting.
- Always end a revision session by summing up or testing yourself.
- Be disciplined about your breaks – Avoid getting drawn into a TV programmes, your phone, social media etc.
- An effective hour might be divided up like this: 30 minutes revising, 20 minutes testing, 10 minutes resting. This varies depending on what you are doing. As exams get closer, the majority of time should be spent on past paper questions.
- If you keep interrupting yourself by going to get food or drink, start your revision session with enough food and drink to last until you've finished!
- Keep a bottle of water nearby when you are revising and take regular sips. Small levels of dehydration can reduce your mental performance.
- Clear your desk/table of everything except for relevant material and equipment and put away anything that might distract you – including your phone!
- You may find it useful to make a note on your timetable of how many hours you revise in each session. This will help when you come to review your revision timetable.
- Give yourself something to look forward to or some kind of reward after revision sessions.
- Exercise is a great way to de-stress, process what you have been revising, get fresh air, and aid sleep – which will set you up for the next day.

My notes