



Active-8

Effective Revision at Maidenhill School

GCSE Pod

There are 2 secrets to successful use of GCSEPod:

1- Preparation- Make sure you have prepared playlists for each subject. Cross reference it with the list of topics you have from your teacher. Make sure you haven't included any podcasts that are NOT relevant to your exam. You can work as a team on this. Why not get a friend to work on a playlist for 1 subject then send you the URL link via email? You can do the same for them.

2. Active listening- It is not effective to just listen to the podcasts. While they are playing, use another revision technique to make sure it gets 'fixed' in your brain.

Self testing

Read a section from your notes, handouts, textbook or listen to a GCSEPod podcast. Make sure you understand the content and then come up with your own test questions.

For example you could study a history chapter on the New Deal and come up with the following questions:

- What did the AAA stand for?
- What year did Roosevelt come to power?
- Name 3 successes of the New Deal

Then, putting your notes away, try to answer these questions and bring your notes back out to see if you got them right. This could be really effective if you are revising with friends. Why not message them at home and get them to message you the answers? They can then do the same for you.

Mnemonics and Acronyms

Mnemonics

These are a great way of learning spellings of tricky words or phrases. For example, if you needed to learn the word tectonic you could come up with a phrase to help you:

Ten Evil Conmen Took Or Nicked Iphones and Coins

Acronyms

These are like Mnemonics but the other way around! Phrases or groups of words can be reduced in length to make other words. For example, the causes of the Russian Revolution are;

October manifesto, Personal weakness, Geography, Industrial, Dumas, Rasputin, Opposition, Bloody Sunday.

To remember this list of words we can take the first letter and make up a word to help us- BROODPIG!

It doesn't have to be a real word, just one that you can remember!

Spider diagrams and Mindmaps

These are a remarkably simple and effective way to revise. Choose a topic from your topic list or exam specification. For each 1 draw a spider diagram showing everything you can find out about the topic. Then, try to add illustrations or other pictures to make it eye-catching. You could also draw links between each piece of information. If revising Geography, how are rivers linked to population? In history, how was progress for black people in USA linked to Presidents?

Remember, your spider diagram has to be eye-catching and easy to read. It does NOT have to be perfectly neat.

Why not use revision cards for this task? Each card could be a mini-spider diagram and you can use your skills of reducing words (from the 'notes on notes' method) to make sure enough information can fit on each card.

Practice Exam Papers

This is the gold standard for revision and extremely effective. See your teacher or look on the internet for past exam papers. Make sure you get the right exam board, exam option and tier- check with your teacher if you are unsure. When you have sourced a paper, pick at least 1 question to complete. There are 2 effective methods of doing this:

1- Attempt it without having done much previous revision. This way you are forced to find correct information out for yourself from your exercise book or revision guide. You could also use GCSEPod for extra details. Complete the question in your own time and then ask your teacher to mark it. If you attempt it again- make sure you go for the 2nd effective method (see below)

2- Revise thoroughly using any or a combination of the methods previously explained. Then, make sure your room is silent and you put all books and notes away. Make sure you know exactly how much time you would get to answer the question in an exam (often 1-2 minutes per mark). Then, complete the question in exam conditions. Hand it in to your teacher and ask them to mark it.

Notes on Notes

Your brain has three kinds of memory cells - sound, sight and feel. The best kind of learning occurs when you use all three at the same time. Writing it down does this - you see the words, you say them in your mind as you write them, and you are using your movement/spatial senses as you write them down on the paper.

One tried and tested method is just to copy out your notes, by hand, again and again. Better still - because it makes you THINK about what you are writing - is to make a paraphrase of your notes, then a paraphrase of the paraphrase, and so on, until you have compressed your notes into a series of cryptic headings. Not only are these easy to learn, by writing and re-writing the words you have helped to fix them in your brain.

Smartass Lists

A 'Smartass' list is an excellent way of deepening your understanding of a subject through key words.

When reading through a textbook or page of notes copy down any word that is directly linked to the subject. For example in RS, 'Qu'ran' and 'Barzakh' are words directly related to your study of Islam. Aim for about 10-20 words for each subject and write down a definition of each. Then, test your friends and parents or get them to test you.

You could also follow this method with words you do not understand fully. Write them down then look up their meaning in a dictionary. Make sure you understand in your own mind what they mean, then follow the testing method explained above.

Flashcards

Cut up a whole load of card or paper. Chunk up your revision by writing 1 topic on each card. Then, write either notes or create a spider diagram showing the key information from the topic. Colour and illustrations can be used and this forces you to reduce the amount of words you write.

Once complete, these cards can be used in many ways:

- You can have them in your blazer pocket and read them on the bus or when you have some spare time.

- Give them to parents or friends and ask them to test you.
- Stick them to your bedroom wall or even on the back of the toilet door!
- Rate them in terms of how confident you are. Tick off those which you are ok with and only focus on the tricky ones.
- Swap them with friends and try to add extra details. You could even pass a group of cards around a friendship group and add 5 words to each card each.