

# The Key to GCSE Success by Anna Kemp

The key to GCSE success is highly attributed to how much time and effort you put into revising. However, **how you revise** also has a huge impact on how well you are able to remember and then utilise this content in your exams. For example, if you 'revise' by just re-writing or re-reading your notes, the information is not being consolidated/rehearsed properly and therefore won't go into your long term memory, since this is passive review. To remember the information we are trying to revise, it needs to be **rehearsed actively** via active engagement. Here are some revision strategies that will help you remember content more effectively.

- **Flashcards/blurting**- This helps you test your knowledge and uses active recall since it is forcing you to retrieve the information you need and therefore rehearses it. Flashcards- write a question on one side and a fairly short answer on the other (or this decreases your chance of recalling the information). Blurting- Write down everything you can remember about a topic and then check and correct, filling in any gaps.
- **Mind-maps/knowledge dumps**- This is ideal for visual learners since you can physically map out a whole topic. Note down all the key concepts within a topic and link these concepts in a web with other visual way- this helps you visualise how the whole content in the topic works together. Fill in any gaps you missed.
- **Feynman technique**- This is ideal for those who learn best by listening/sound. It forces you to simplify complex information, allowing you to see any knowledge gaps and improves your confidence with a topic. Explain the topic you're revising to another person/out loud as if you're teaching a new concept in simple terms which allows you to break the concept down, making it easier to understand.
- **Spaced repetition**- It prevents you experiencing the 'forgetting curve' by making you rehearse a piece of information at increasing intervals, strengthening your long-term memory. Revise a topic over spaced out intervals that increase overtime e.g learn the material on day 1, review it again on day 2, 3 and 5 (focus on parts you struggle with) and finally on day 7. Make sure you keep on rehearsing the information after this at least once a week. There are many different intervals you can use, this is just one example.
- Using **videos** to help your understanding of a topic. When revising if you do not understand the material you are trying to revise, you are less likely to recall the information. One way to improve your understanding is to watch videos, as these normally give better a explanation than from a written piece of text. However, preferably these videos should follow your exam board specifications since there are differences between content covered and requirements in each exam board. Good videos to watch for science are cognito, and for maths, 1stclassmaths or CorbettMaths.

Now that you can better recall the content you need for your exams, this must be put into practice in terms of **exam technique**. GCSE's not only test your knowledge of the content but also how well you can apply this in questions, which have a certain way they should be answered, depending on the exam board. To increase your exam technique it is good to:

- **Complete past papers + questions**. This allows you to practice the type of questions your exam board for the subject you are revising asks. By marking these, there is normally a trend in the type of answers they want you to give.

**REVISION**

Time	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
9am-4pm	School	School	School	School	School	Free Time	Free Time
5pm-6pm	physics	Biology	chemistry	physics	Biology	Free Time	Free Time
6pm-7pm	chemistry	physics	Biology	chemistry	History	Art	Art
7pm-9pm	History	History	History	English	Maths	Art	Art
8pm-9:30pm	Biology	English	Maths	Biology	physics	Art	Art
9:30pm-9pm	English	Maths	physics	Maths	English	Free Time	Free Time
9pm-9:30pm	Maths	chemistry	English	History	chemistry	Free Time	Free Time

- school  
 - free time  
 - physics  
 - Biology  
 - Chemistry  
 - History  
 - Maths  
 - English  
 - Art

GCSE's are very content heavy exams and these are exams you are taking in many subjects. Therefore it is important that you **manage your time well** in terms of revising. Examples of bad time management could be spending too much time revising one subject and completing forgetting the others. To prevent this, it is good to create a plan/schedule of when you will revise each subject using a planner/calendar to create a **REVISION TIMETABLE**. Keeping a **checklist of topics** within a subject and categorising these into red, amber and green can help you **prioritise** topics that

need revising most if you feel overwhelmed. You should also prioritise sleep over learning a few more pieces of information since this has a huge impact on turning the information you have revised into a form you can recall into your long term memory. Hopefully these techniques can help you improve your revise strategies, and therefore your grades!