Section 1: Creating an effective revision space

A clean, well equipped study environment helps revision. It removes distractions and promotes an organised approach to study...things you can include:

- Creating a tidy undisturbed place to work.
- Having a comfortable chair.
- Using a table which gives enough room for books, etc.
- A bright lamp.
- Pens, pencils, other equipment including scrap paper.

Section 2: Active Revision Techniques

Simply reading through work is a VERY POOR way of remembering it. You can spend hours thinking that you're revising by doing this – but actually, very little information stays in your head!

Active revision methods are much better. Ten active revision methods are:

1. Summarise points on revision cards (we will look at this in more depth in Stage 3); these can be cut down again nearer to the exam.
2. Use mnemonics (we will be looking at these in Stage 5).
3. Make mind maps/spider diagrams; stick them on the wall (again we will be looking at these in Stage 4)
4. Repeat lists or processes aloud over and over again.
5. Tape notes and play them back.
6. Set yourself questions from your notes – go over wrong answers.
7. Explain work to a friend/parent.
8. Get someone to test you.
9. Try the activities on the Bitesize videos (just watching the video isn't good enough) Go to the LRC: they have the videos!
10. When you feel ready, work through past papers.

Section 3: Revision Cards

A very good way to turn lesson notes into a form that is more manageable when you come to revise is to make a set of REVISION CARDS.

A good REVISION CARD should contain all the KEY POINTS on a topic in a clear and concise way. It should be a condensed version of whatever you have in your notes and you should be able to take in the information on the card at a glance.

By transferring information from your notes to the REVISION CARD you are re-learning what you have covered in class. This is because you have to put information in your own words, and to do that you have to understand it!
A REVISION CARD should just have the key points on. It shouldn’t have loads and loads of detail. If you come back to a REVISION CARD and you don’t understand it, use your more detailed class notes.

Section 4: Mind Maps

Mind mapping is really useful for listing lots of ideas and connecting them together. You can use it to record information as you are revising or you can use it to see how much you know or have remembered about a topic, area or subject.

How to Mind Map

• Use just key words, or wherever possible images.
• Start from the centre of the page and work out.
• Make the centre a clear and strong visual image that depicts the general theme of the map.
• Create sub-centres for sub-themes.
• Put key words on lines. This reinforces the structure of notes.
• Print rather than write in script. It makes them more readable and memorable. Lower case is more visually distinctive (and better remembered) than upper case.
• Use colour to depict themes, associations and to make things stand out.
• Anything that stands out on the page will stand out in your mind.
• Think three-dimensionally.
• Use arrows, icons or other visual aids to show links between different elements.
• Don’t get stuck in one area. If you dry up in one area go to another branch.
• Put ideas down as they occur, wherever they fit. Don’t judge or hold back.
• Break boundaries. If you run out of space, don’t start a new sheet; paste more paper onto the map.
• Be creative. Creativity aids memory.
Section 5: Mnemonics

Mnemonics are really simple but very useful for revision. You can use them to remember a sequence of events, a list of facts or parts of a process.

To create a Mnemonic all you have to do is write down a list of facts or information. Here’s an example designed to help remember the order of the planets that circle our sun.

The first thing to do is write them down in order:

Mercury Venus Earth Mars Jupiter Saturn Uranus Neptune Pluto

Then take the first letter from each of the planet names:

M V E M J S U N P

Then you create a memorable sentence or phrase that uses each of the letters above in turn as the first letter of each word in my new sentence

My Very Early Morning Jam Sandwich Usually Nauseates People

Doing this helps you to create something memorable that you can decode when you need to.

Section 6: Successful Revision – Ten steps

1. Find a good environment in which to revise (comfortable, no distractions).
2. Make a realistic revision timetable; mark subjects and topics on it (use your subjects’ revision lists to do this; see your teachers about missing work).
3. Know your areas of strength and weakness; mix them up on your timetable (you don’t gain by revising all the easy topics – but you’ll have nightmares if you only revise your worst bits!)
4. Always make your own revision notes (you will learn as you write and once you’ve made the notes, you’re half way there).
5. Stay focussed (don’t try to make notes about everything… stick to the important points).
6. Use other active revision techniques for extra success and to break up the boredom.
7. Tick off topics when you’ve revised them; feel good about it!
8. Split your revisions into 40 minute long sessions, including time to test what you’ve remembered.
9. Have a short relaxation/exercise break between revision sessions to unwind.
10. Frequently remind yourself how useful your revision is, and look back at what you’ve achieved so far.