

Parents Guide to Examination Performance



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Subject Checklist					
Topics for Revision	Confident	OK	Unsure	Notes / time needed for revision	Complete

How do I help my child to study and revise for their examinations?

Subject Checklist					
Topics for Revision	Confident	OK	Unsure	Notes / time needed for revision	Complete

Saltley Academy works hard to help your child but we need your help because:

- You can provide one to one support and guidance for your child, whereas a teacher can only spend a short while with each pupil.
- You see your child for longer periods than the subject teacher at school

The essentials

Revision should be:

active – reading information is not as effective as doing mind maps, writing lists, and key words. Through doing they will learn more. Interactive websites testing knowledge are useful but they are only one way of learning

short – your child should work for 30-40 minutes and then take a break. Any longer and revision becomes less effective

quiet – if your child wants to listen to music, this is fine but soothing music helps the brain. Loud music slows down their learning. It is better if they do not listen to music through head phones

planned – they should have a plan which should be flexible i.e.
 5.00-5.30 English— (linguistic devices)
 6.10-6.40 Maths (numbers)
 7.00-7.30 Science (chemical compounds)

regular – your child should aim for 1-2 hours each evening, starting now rather than saying “I will start next week”, or in April

on-going – it is never finished. There is no such thing as “I have finished everything” or “I have nothing to do”

focused – your child can’t text, email, listen to music and revise. Multi-tasking means that the effectiveness of their revision is reduced by 40% .

organised – your child should get everything s/he needs before beginning each session – different coloured pens, paper, etc

The summer examinations—What can be done now!

Taking Action

How to start

Your child has been asked to produce a revision timetable -

This should include :

- a checklist by writing down a list of all the topics which you need to revise for **each** subject; how long will that topic take; start using the blank checklists starting on page 9
- they should follow the timetable - ticking when they are satisfied that they understand that topic. This will confirm progression and keep motivation levels high
- if your child falls behind in their plan find out what went wrong in order them to get them back on track. Change the plan—may be add in an extra session/s over the weekend.

The reluctant learner – the ten minute rule

Remind your child:

- that getting started is the most difficult bit - ask your child to work for ten minutes, then let them have a break and start again.
- encourage your child to increase the working time to 30 minutes and keep the breaks regular and short. Your child has made a start. Whenever your child is having difficulty in starting revision remind them that staring into space won't help – but the 10 minute rule will help.
- when studying, study and when relaxing, relax. The two don't mix. Texting friends, using the Internet are not studying. Plan what studying they need to do. Then take a break.

Encourage your child to create information charts for each subject

- They should write up a list of **key words and short explanations** on sheets of paper for each subject
- Pin the **sheets on the wall in their bedroom, study area and anywhere else that they can be looked at each day**
- These will enable your child to **take in information** even when not sitting down to a timetabled revision session
- Learning information in this way will **increase your child's rate of remembering important facts of a subject**. The information will already be stored in their memory. They could visualise this in an exam
- Encourage your child to **test themselves** on their notes, charts and diagrams on a daily basis

This way information will stay in the memory for longer. Last minute revision is rushed revision and will make teenagers more stressed and worried.

Science Checklist					
Topics for Revision	Confident	OK	Unsure	Notes / time needed for revision	Complete

Maths Checklist

Topics for Revision	Confident	OK	Unsure	Notes / time needed for revision	Complete

Different revision methods

Keep a fact book or write facts on index cards

- 1 Take a page / card per topic
- 2 Bullet point key facts / mind map key facts
- 3 Read this information as frequently as possible

Practice Questions from past Exam papers

- 1 Pupils can get past questions from school. Keep practising!
- 2 Past exam papers can be downloaded (see below)
- 3 Read the question, underline key parts, understand what the question is asking you to do before starting to write down an answer

Do Practice Answers

- 1 At first, take as much time as needed to do the question as well as possible
- 2 Then practice doing them in the amount of time there is in the exam

Use only the recommended websites (available on Frognet) e.g. <http://smoodle.myvle.org/brumtalks>, www.mymaths.co.uk, <http://frog.saltley.bham.sch.uk/englishpastpapers>

- 1 Use web sites recommended by the Maths, English and Science Departments
- 2 Use the websites to make a note of new facts for their fact book
- 3 Keep practising examples—practice makes perfect

Using a text book to revise

The only way to revise using a text book is to

Read the *index*
write down words that they do not understand. Write down a simple meaning

Use a glossary – which gives a definition
go through the *glossary* and write down the terms that are not understood

Read the Contents Page
List the topics and next to each one and write confident) ok (?), unsure (X). Now your child should take this list to the teacher and ask about the topics they are unsure of

Read the summary at the end of each chapter and write out new facts in the fact book.

Always go back to the problem areas - during the next revision session check your child has remembered what they learned. Pupils like to revise what they are most confident about first.

English Checklist

Topics for Revision	Confident	OK	Unsure	Notes / time needed for revision	Complete

Talking to you child about the examination

Tell them not to:

- **Panic** if their mind appears to go blank. Once they start answering questions their memory will start to work again – look at the key words in the question, this will help
- **Forget to include all their workings** - they could get plenty of marks for them. Waste time thinking and worrying about losing an odd mark in part of a question they don't know the answer to. Leave it, come back to it later, if they have time
- **Let their handwriting let them down** – the words and numbers must be able to be read.

Get your child to relax before going into the exam room by

- Taking regular deep breaths
- Tense and relax muscles (especially their writing hand)
- Sip water

Well planned revision means better knowledge and better grades

Designing an environment for studying

Make sure that every member of the household is fully aware of the importance of your child's forthcoming exams. Ask them to offer support, understanding and co-operation. Get rid of external noise from the television set, computer games, other people, children playing, shouting, Try to give your child a quiet space to work in.

If your child has to study in the same room as a television, turn it off while they are studying.

Allow no interruptions during study periods if your child has a shared room, request that they are left alone for their revision session

If it is important for your child to have access to a computer, then make sure they have priority over everyone else, for their revision times

The playing of music

Remember quiet relaxing music can stimulate the brain.

Preparing the Workplace:

Make sure that your child has:

- a tidy, quiet place to work
- a comfortable chair
- a table which allows enough room for books and stationery
- a bright table lamp
- all the books s/he needs – school notes, revision guides and so on, pens, pencils, scrap paper etc
- revision booklets – usually provided by the school

Why do some pupils lose marks in the examination

Problem

They misunderstand the question and so do not answer it correctly

Solution

Read the questions carefully and highlight key words like explain and describe to avoid this. It is easy to answer a different question because it is the one they have revised for.

Problem

They write what they know, miss the main points and do not link their ideas to the question

Solution

Avoid this by highlighting the key words, making a few constructive notes, referring to the question every now and again to make sure they are still on track.

Problem

They write pages of text but only answer some of the questions and so loose marks

Solution

They may have answered one question brilliantly, but now they have no time for the rest of the paper, or rush the other questions. **Look at how the marks are given for each part of the question and structure their answers accordingly e.g.; 2 marks do not require a very long answer and 10 marks need more than a brief paragraph – not many exam questions expect three sides of writing.**

Problem

They do not include enough information or explain their answers E.g. “It is nice”, or “it shows that it was quite hard” “I think it was fairly important” but do not give any reasons for their comments

Solution

Again **look at how the marks are given for each part of the question and structure their answers accordingly e.g. 2 marks do not require a very long answer and 10 marks need more than a brief paragraph. Give reasons (explain) your answer. I agree because....**

Problem

They misread simple words in the question, e.g.:

“Why are mosques built in such a way.....?” (Reason)

Answer *“Mosques are built like” (Description)*

Solution **Pupil describes what the mosque looks like not why it was built in a particular style**

Problem

Pupils do not attempt all the questions or answer the right questions so they loose marks

Solution

They need to attempt all of the questions they are required to . If there is no answer it clearly gains zero mark. In other words, have a go at the ones they have little knowledge of it may gain they a few extra marks, which may make every difference overall. Make sure all questions are answered.

English Checklist

Topics for Revision	Confident	OK	Unsure	Notes / time needed for revision	Completed