

# Revision Skills 2009: A Survival Guide for Archbishop Lanfranc Year 11 Pupils



## LEARNING AND REVISING

### LEARNING

- is an on-going process in which you build upon previous knowledge and understanding. Prior to the exams there will be a lot of revision work completed in class, if you learn this work as you do it, you will save a lot of time later on when doing your personal revision.
- is a long-term process and cannot be done by trying to cram information into a few weeks. It involves completely understanding topics and memorising information.
- is rather like inputting and processing the information on a computer. At first the computer needs to be programmed - the information fed into the processor or computer's brain. This stage takes time. Once 'stored' in the memory, the information then can be 'accessed' or taken out and used.



### REVISION

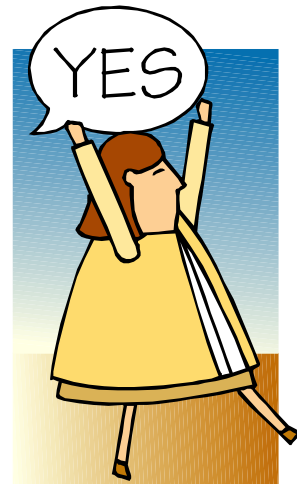
- is fixing in your memory the things that you know. Think of the computer again. It can reproduce the information that you put into it provided you ask it the right questions. Unlike the computer, however, your memory needs refreshing regularly, but if you do this, the information can be 'called up' in the same easy way as you would when accessing files on a computer.
- is learning to unlock your memory. You need to have memory prompts to help you to 'call up' what you know.
- is learning to select and adapt what you know. By doing this, you can answer all the different types of exam questions that you will meet.



## LEARNING AND REVISING

You have been learning all your life, but you need to start learning for GCSE success. Here are a few practical hints:

- ✓ **Do** make sure that you get all you can from each lesson. It makes sense to ask questions if you do not understand.
- ✓ **Do** make sure you understand new concepts. Never leave a lesson expecting that things will sort themselves out at a later date. It never happens!
- ✓ **Do** practice exam questions. This helps ensure that you understand your work and develops your memory recall techniques.
- ✓ **Do** develop easy ways of memorising information.
- ✓ **Do** make sure that you know what the exam papers will look like, get to know the different types of questions asked and what marks are available for each part of a given set of questions.
- ✓ **Do** make sure that you understand what the examiners want when they use words like 'explain', 'compare', 'contrast', 'describe', 'analyse' and 'discuss'.



- ✗ **Don't** let yourself get too tired. Your brain needs time to absorb information.
- ✗ **Don't** worry if you have not solved every single problem before you finish your evening's revision work. The brain is a problem solver and things often look clearer in the morning!

## PLANNING YOUR REVISION

Revision needs determination and planning.

**Keep refreshing your memory** of what you have learned. If you spread the workload over a period of time you;

- are likely to achieve more.
- will be under a lot less pressure and can enjoy your work.
- are less likely to experience stress and strain.
- will have more time to relax, keep fit and enjoy life.

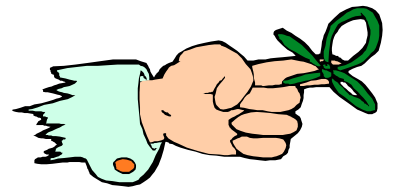


**Planning** is vital;

- think about the best way to divide up your valuable time left.
- make a list of all the topics you need to revise.
- highlight those parts of your work of which you are not too sure about and give them more of your initial revision time.
- divide each topic into manageable parts.
- plan, design and draw up a timetable for revision.
- find out the times and dates of the exam as soon as possible to help you when you draw up your exam revision timetable.

**Remember to;**

- find a quiet place where you can work undisturbed.
- include every subject in your revision, every grade is vital to your future success.
- plan to do short bursts of revision in a variety of subjects every day.
- get into the habit of revising at set times. Different people learn best at different times. Find out which is the best time for you.
- switch off the radio, TV or CD. Your mind will concentrate better if you are not distracted. Ask people not to disturb you until your allotted time, then have the drink of coffee or chocolate break and watch that favourite programme without a guilty conscience.
- arrange to have regular breaks of 5-10 minutes between revision sessions.



- test yourself regularly. Get someone to give you a quick 5-10 minute test on what you have just revised. For example, "Tell me the 10 most important points to remember?" "What is written on the far left of the diagram?" "What is missing from this quotation?"

**An example of a typical revision timetable for 1 week only**

Keeping to such a timetable will improve your confidence and make it possible to revise all subjects. **Draw up such a timetable for a 2 week period for your own use.**

**e.g**  
**WEEK A**

Time including breaks	7-8 am	8.15-2.30	3.00pm - 5.00pm	5.00 pm- 6.00pm	6.00pm - 7.00pm	7.00pm - 8.00pm	8.00pm - 9.00pm	10.00 onwards
<b>Monday</b>	Get		Homework	Family	Maths & PE retest	TV	ICT	Bed relax
<b>Tuesday</b>	to		Sport	Family	English & French retest	Maths retest	TV	Bed relax
<b>Wednesday</b>	School		Homework	ICT retest	Family	English & French retests	History	TV Bed
<b>Thursday</b>	on		Sport	Family	French	History & Science retests	Geography	Bed relax
<b>Friday</b>	time!		Homework	Family	Family	Friends	DVD	Bed relax
<b>Weekend time including breaks</b>	7-9 am	9-11 am	11-1pm	1-3 pm	3-5 pm	5-7 pm	7-9 pm	9-10 pm
<b>Saturday</b>		Shopping	Sport	Sport & TV	Homework	Cinema	Cinema	Relax
<b>Sunday</b>			Family	See Friends	See Friends	Revision for a test	TV	Relax

## FIVE TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE REVISION

### Tip number 1: Prepare your workplace



Make sure that you have:

- ✓ a tidy, undisturbed place to work
- ✓ a comfortable chair
- ✓ a table which gives you enough room for you books and other equipment such as pens, pencils, calculators and scrap paper
- ✓ a bright table lamp
- ✓ all the books, notes, revision guides etc.,

that you need should be close to hand

### Tip number 2: Learning by heart

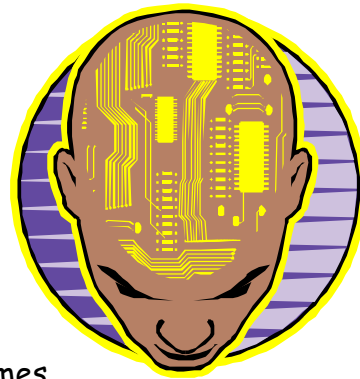
Try to memorise:

- ✓ connections between fact and patterns e.g. definitions, scientific laws
- ✓ vocabulary in whichever foreign language that you are learning
- ✓ quotations from literature, history etc
- ✓ diagrams or drawings of science apparatus, physical land features etc
- ✓ facts such as chemical symbols
- ✓ mathematical formulae, times tables etc

### Tip number 3: Active learning

You can stimulate your mind and learn effectively by:

- ✓ briefly writing down important points and or reading out aloud
- ✓ drawing diagrams or flow charts several times
- ✓ testing yourself by covering an original drawing, drawing it again and then checking it against the original
- ✓ persuade someone else to test you on what you have learned
- ✓ underlining interesting points or quotations
- ✓ making up word games and mnemonics to help you e.g. to distinguish stalactite from stalagmite growth, remember that tights fall down, mites go up!
- ✓ work through past exam papers and/or questions set by staff



### Tip number 4: Revision Notes

Make and modify your notes to help you learn by:

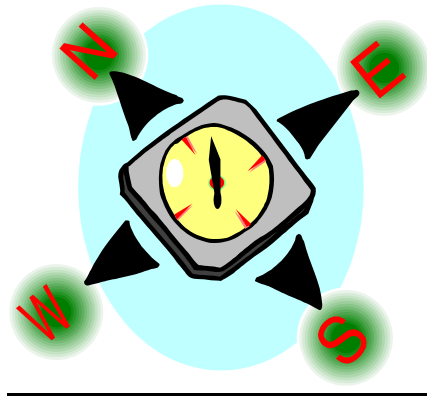
- ✓ taking short, well-spaced, numbered and headed notes in revision lessons
- ✓ putting only the main points on post-cards
- ✓ using numbered lists e.g. the seven characteristics of living things
- ✓ using mind maps or spider diagrams
- ✓ using revision guides and textbooks to add to areas of your notes that do not have sufficient detail



### Tip number 5: Word Patterns to Memorise

Some people jog their memories using word patterns - using initial letters, names etc. Some are shown below:

- ✓ word associations e.g. mitosis in toes
- ✓ initial letters e.g. CHOPINS - Carbon, Hydrogen, Oxygen, Phosphorus, Iodine, Nitrogen, Sulphur  
or for characteristics of living - Mr SNERG Movement, Respiration, Sensitivity, Excretion, Reproduction and Growth.
- ✓ rhymes e.g. Never Eat Shredded Wheat = North, East, South, West



## PATTERNS AND PICTURES TO JOG YOUR MEMORY

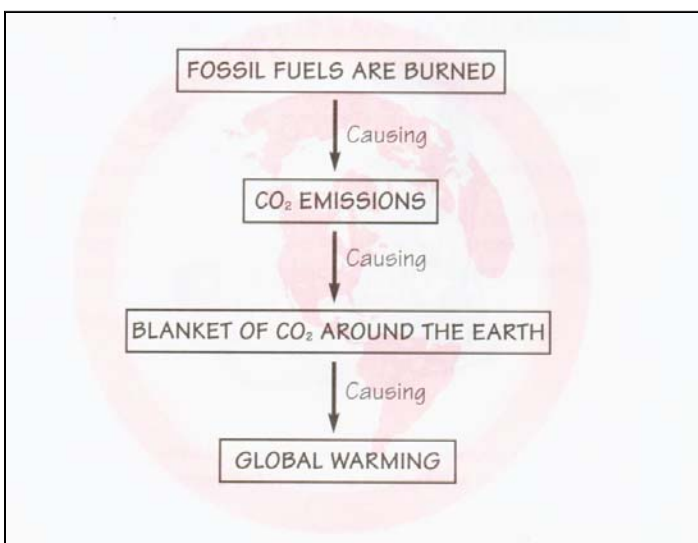
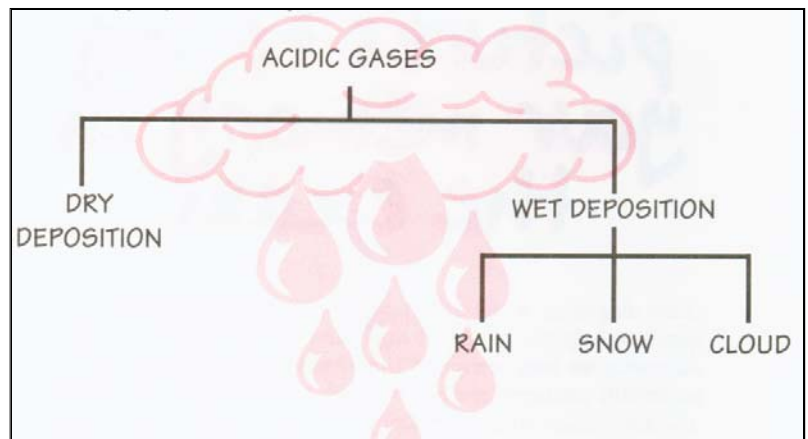
Quick diagrams of the main points you need to answer a question can be very helpful. Diagrams are also great time-savers. Also 'pictures' of important patterns are much easier to remember than words and are quicker to read and revise. A funny picture usually makes it easier to remember facts and patterns.



A bit of English literature and Shakespeare perhaps?

"To be or not to be, that is the question!"

Tree Charts



Flowcharts showing cause and effect; which could be used in all subjects from science to history.

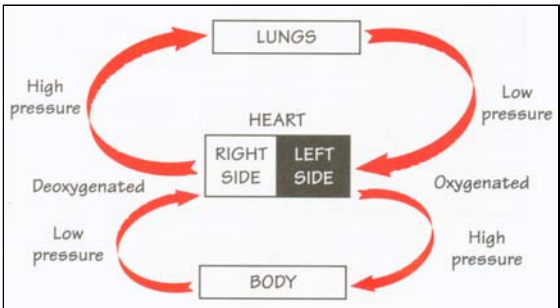
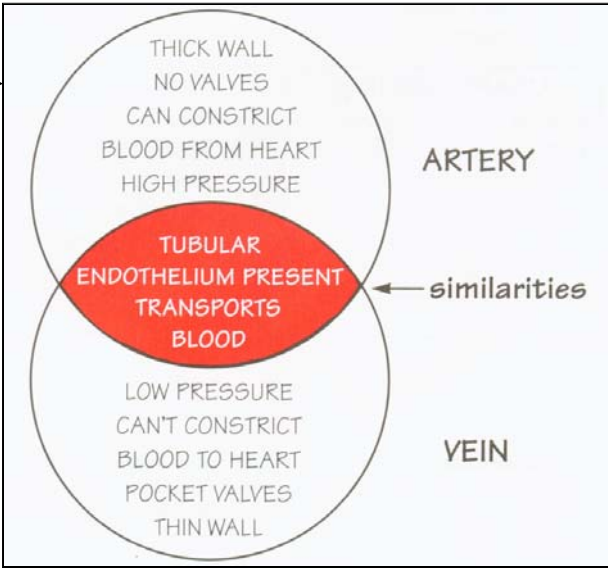
ADVANTAGES (Pro)	DISADVANTAGES (Con)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Wide range of outlets</li> <li>b. Buy now, pay later</li> <li>c. Convenience of payment</li> <li>d. Security – no cash</li> <li>e. 'Perks' – e.g. insurance, gift schemes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Need good credit record</li> <li>b. Interest charged after time allowed for repayment</li> <li>c. Minimum age 18 (usually)</li> <li>d. High interest rates</li> <li>e. Risk of fraud</li> </ul>

Two sides to an argument?

Use this balancing technique of 'Pros and Cons'

Similarities and differences?

Try this method of presenting the facts



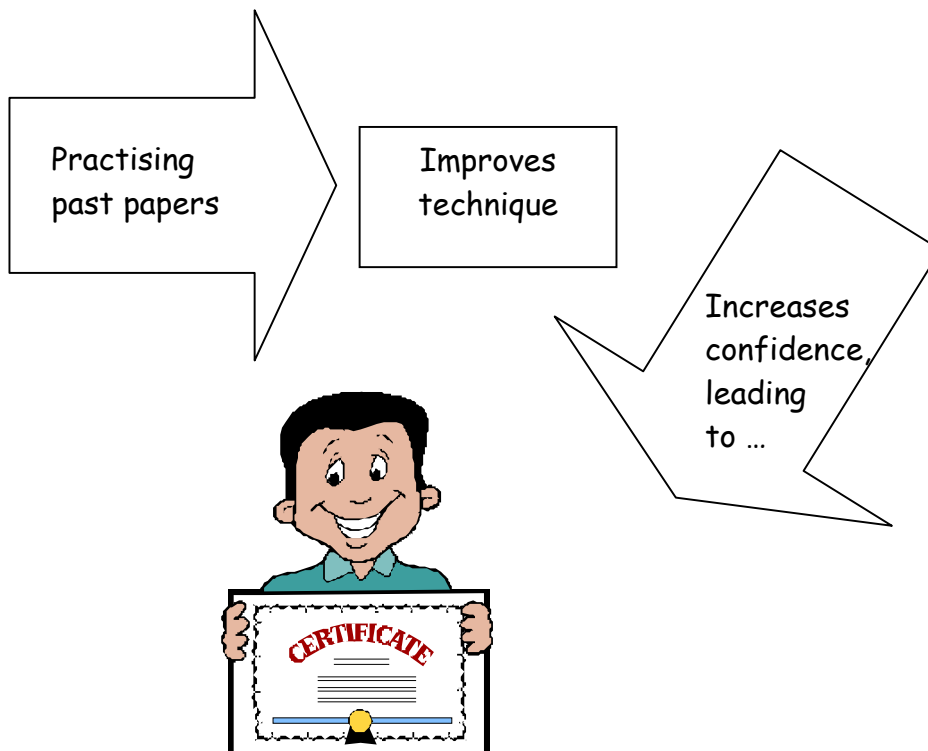
Diagrams that show details and key aspects e.g. direction/impact/effects

**Web sites** - do not waste too much time surfing the Internet for easy revision answers. The best site is [www.bbc.co.uk/education/revision](http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/revision). Here you can get extra revision notes and test yourself on what you have learned from your books and **own** revision notes!

## PRACTISING EXAM QUESTIONS

Remember the following key points when you are practising your exam technique under timed conditions:

- ✓ Examiners have a limited number of types of questions that they can ask. The more you have practised exam questions in class and for homework, the more prepared you should be!
- ✓ Practising helps you to time how long different types and forms of question take to complete properly.
- ✓ Given the mark scheme, you should begin to realise how much time is needed for a question that awards 3 marks compared to one that rewards 15 marks.
- ✓ Make sure you get to know how the exam paper is laid out. Remember that you often have a choice of questions from which to answer.
- ✓ Get into the habit of reading all parts of a question first, before choosing it as one that you will begin to answer. Remember, if you can only really do parts 'a' and 'b' of a question what about parts 'c, d and e' - often worth more marks in a multi-part question. Do not penalise yourself!



## IN THE EXAMINATION ROOM

Obviously you will be nervous but there are things that you can do in the exam room that will help you.

- ✓ **Do** get out all the equipment you will need in the exam. Indeed, make sure that you have got everything that you need the night before. For example, spare pens and pencils in a clear plastic pencil case.
- ✓ **Do** remember, if you are allowed to take annotated texts or notes into the exam room, to bring them with you on the day.
- ✓ **Do** make sure that your watch is set at the same time as the exam room clock. At regular intervals remember to check the time.
- ✓ **Do** listen to staff who are reading out instructions in the exam room.
- ✓ **Do** read all the exam paper questions that relate to you. Make sure that you understand the instructions written on the exam paper.
- ✓ **Do** underline important words in the questions to remind yourself of what exactly is required of you. For example, look out for questions that have a number of parts "**How** and **why** does X happen **when** ..."
- ✓ **Do** make sure that you leave 5 minutes at the end of the exam to check you answers, spellings and grammar. You get marks for accurate spelling and punctuation.



- ✗ **Do not** panic if your mind appears to go blank. Once you start answering questions your memory will often start to work again.
- ✗ **Do not** waste time thinking and worrying about losing an odd mark in part of a question you don't know the answer to. Leave it and come back to it later.
- ✗ **Do not** let your handwriting let you down - if examiners cannot read it, they cannot give it a mark!
- ✗ **Do not** lose marks by making silly errors - mobile phones are not allowed in exam rooms, talking - even if your exam paper has been removed from your desk - can mean that you will be found to be in breach of the exam rules and banned from taking any further exam papers.

## WHAT THE EXAMINERS EXPECT FROM ME?

**R**emember that the examiner is on your side - he or she wants to give you the marks if at all possible - but you have to earn them. Therefore, check out these words used by examiners:

- ❑ **Calculate** - this means that a numerical answer is needed - remember to show your working out.
- ❑ **Complete** - you must finish a sentence, drawing, table, graph etc.
- ❑ **Contrast** - Look for differences.
- ❑ **Define** - describe precisely, give the meaning.
- ❑ **Describe** - a series of important points that must be written down in a few sentences.
- ❑ **Discuss** - you must indicate points in favour of an argument and points against - then sum up in a conclusion what you believe at the end.
- ❑ **Explain** - write down what you understand - sometimes a diagram can be used to help your explanation e.g. in science.
- ❑ **Find** - this term is often used in maths and may mean that you have to do a calculation or make a reading from a graph or take a measurement.
- ❑ **Interpret** - Explain the meaning in your own words.
- ❑ **Outline** - brief points are needed about the most important parts of an argument or event.
- ❑ **Predict** - use some given information, or information which you have just found out in a calculation, to say what is likely to happen as (or to) a result.
- ❑ **State** - a brief answer giving basic facts is needed.
- ❑ **Suggest** - this often refers to information or a situation in which you are expected to use judgements to suggest a logical conclusion.



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Finally - Good Luck!  
But if you've done your revision properly, luck  
will only play a small part in your ultimate  
success!

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