

Parental Guide to Study Skills & Revision at JCoSS

We have a dedicated Teaching & Learning Team at JCoSS and some of the most frequently asked questions we receive are about how parents can support their child's study.

We tend to focus on this at GCSE, and yet the foundations of independent study begin in Key Stage Three, with years 7, 8 & 9. We have a pastoral curriculum which runs in am form time and part of this curriculum delivers age appropriate study skills through Years 7 to 11.

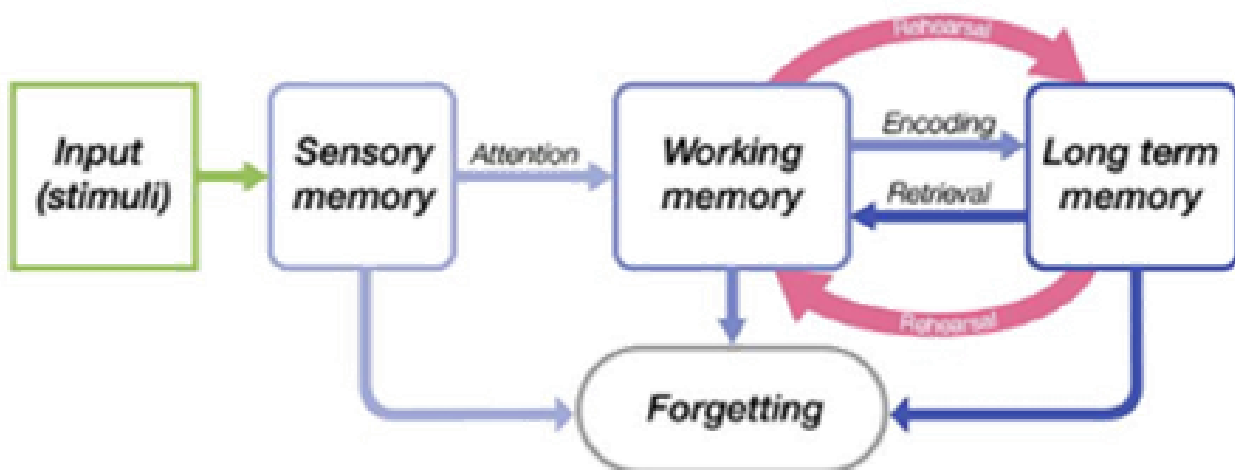
Ultimately, the goal is to build independent, organised learners so they have the skills and techniques of effective learners firmly embedded in their study habits by Year 10.

As a first port of call in how to help your child with their study and revision, please see the FAQs below.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why are study skills and revision important?

Revision is about remembering & recall. As your child learns, there will be large amounts of content that they will need to consolidate and secure, in order to keep learning and making progress. The easiest way to explain this is by thinking about our memory.



- Our memory can be divided into three parts: Sensory, Working, and Long term.
- The goal is for all knowledge and information to be embedded and encoded into your child's long term memory. Revision strategies like transformation, mind maps, recall, flash cards and blurting allow the process of encoding to happen.
- When your child revisits and revises content, it gets positioned into their long term memory, where they can retrieve it when they need to, in order to continue learning.
- Retrieving information, recall, needs practise. In order to be able to retrieve and use information when it is necessary, repeated testing is needed to ensure that knowledge can be confidently retrieved when it is needed.

2. How can I create the right environment at home to encourage good independent study skills?

You know your child and their needs best and the following is designed to be adapted by parents to their family context. The journey towards GCSE and A Level study begins in Year 7 when there can be a big adjustment from Primary to Secondary Home Learning.

Organisation and admin

- All home learning assignments are set through Microsoft Teams by teachers and appear on Firefly as a title and due date.
- In Year 7 more help will be needed in organising and navigating home learning from multiple teachers and subjects, but the aim for parents/carers should be to scaffold support which will slowly fade away, giving your child the opportunity to develop independent study and organisational skills.
- We recommend sitting down with your child, perhaps after school on a Friday before Shabbat comes in, going through Firefly and helping them plan out their home learning for the week, over the weekend and into the following week.
 - If they have a test, plan in when they are going to create flashcards / revision resources and when they will test themselves, as this will probably need to happen over 3 or 4 study sessions.
 - Write in after school clubs or family events so that everyone knows what is happening when.
 - Pre-planning how and when homework will be done can minimise conflict in the long run.
 - Planners are available to purchase from Student Services

Study environment

- Study time should always be a phone free environment, if possible downstairs where parents can see work is actually being done, to enable students to work smarter, rather than longer, avoiding distractions.
- If the home learning does not require it to be done on a computer then handwritten in books is best, currently all examinations are handwritten and it is best to work in the way in which ultimately students will be examined.
- By the January before GCSEs we would expect students to be working at getting three study sessions a night completed and four each day at the weekend.
- Make sure your child is working for 45 -50 minutes and then taking a 10 minute break.
- Use a pomodoro timer to help with concentration, which sets out study and rest break intervals.

3. What should my child's exercise book / folder look like?

Keeping an eye on your child's work can be difficult and often knowing what to look out for can be tricky. Your child is studying over 15 different subjects and they are all unique and wonderful in what they are trying to achieve. However there are some constants you should be aiming to look for in their books.

The Basics:

- A looked after exercise book – a wrapper around the book
- Dates and titles are underlined
- Writing in a blue or black pen only
- Drawing/diagrams/bar charts in pencil
- Work which is wrong has one clear line crossed through it
- No doodling/graffitti
- Neat handwriting
- No loose sheets, any handouts have been glued in

Digging deeper:

- A clear starter/do now activity after the date and title
- Marking code (on the inside front cover/back cover)
- Feedback from the teacher in purple pen

- Improvement made by your child in red pen – REFLECT and PERFECT
- Bank of key words in the book of the exercise book

Questions you can ask your child based on the book:

1. What did you find easy about this particular lesson? Why?
2. What was something new you learnt in this lesson? Why?
3. What did you find hard to do in the lesson? Why?
4. Can you show me something that you improved because of teacher feedback. How did you know to make this improvement like this?
5. Have you caught up on work you missed because of absence? Can you show me it and explain it?

How can I be sure my child's study skills are effective?

We recommend that all students in KS3 have core study skills which will support them not just in KS3 but beyond. Ensuring these skills are embedded will only serve to ensure they are fully ready to be an independent learner.

1. Develop Key Study Skills Study skills!

In Years 7, 8 and 9 you'll have to tackle homework, revise for tests and organise your time. Nailing these type of study skills is vital to their success at school both now and in the future.

2. Plan Ahead for Tests

Help them plan their revision to make them feel more in control and ensures they make the most of the time they revise. In simple terms, planning involves finding out what sort of test it is, when it will take place, what topics are to be covered, how much revision you need to do and when you're going to do it.

3. Make Revision Active

The best way to revise is to work actively rather than just flicking through class notes or a revision guide. Active revision means getting your senses involved by using your eyes, ears and hands! Active revision methods include making flashcards, testing themselves or getting someone else to test them, doing quizzes on an app, watching videos about a topic, trying sample questions and teaching a topic to a family member.

4. Max Out Marks in Tests

Here are some great ideas to help you get more marks in tests: ✓ Always write neatly and clearly. ✓ Spend more time on questions worth more marks. ✓ If you get stuck on a question move on and come back to it later. ✓ Have a go at every question on the paper. ✓ Never leave blank spaces. ✓ Leave a little time at the end of the test to go back and answer any questions you've left out. ✓ If you finish early, check for careless mistakes and add to your answers if you can

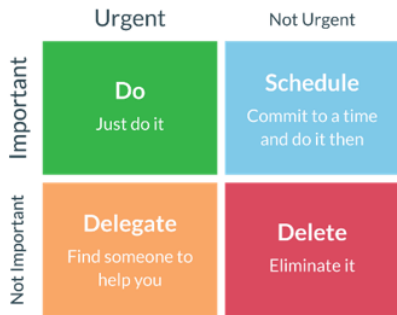
5. Use effective revision techniques:

The following are revision techniques which take you through the steps shared with students to improve their own practices. It is preferable for KS3 students to go in order; prioritise, transform, test practice.

a) Prioritise



Red, Amber, Green – Sometimes referred to RAGing - a simple way to help your child is to 'traffic light' the topics/subtopics in their exercise books. A simple highlighting of the lesson title can be a simple way to figure out if it is 'red' – difficult, do not understand it, 'amber' – sort of understand it, but need a bit of help and could not answer an exam question on it, and 'green' – totally understand it, could easily answer an exam question on it.



Eisenhower matrix – Do, Delegate, Schedule and Delete. Your children will have endless task to do for school and even in their personal life. Eisenhower matrix helps them prioritise what needs to be done first and what can be done later.

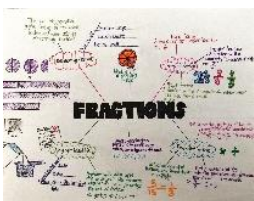


Ranking – simply help your child by ranking the topics in a subject from best to worst. This is a simple way to start conversations about why certain topics are stronger than others. This can provide a launchpad into conversation about how they became good at something that maybe once found difficult.

b) Transformative



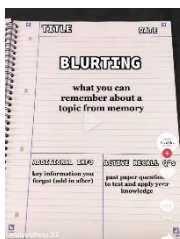
Knowledge organiser - Knowledge organisers are a summary of the key facts and essential knowledge that pupils need about a unit of work or a curriculum subject. They should be no more than one side of A4 with all the information broken down into easily digestible chunks.



Mind mapping - A mind map is a **visual diagram** used to organise data or information around a single concept or topic. It is a great memorisation tool and useful for revision.



Flashcards – This is active way of engaging with content and starting to surmise key content into manageable chunks. Using flash card alongside a technique called the Leitner system is helpful way to improve long term memory. Please check this [link](#) for a description of the Leitner system.



Blurting – This is highly rated revision technique by GCSE and A Level student and is really recommended to KS3. It involves writing out everything you can remember about topic from memory. Then in a different colour pen adding in what you've missed from your exercise book/textbook. Then retest yourself and the aim is to ensure you don't need to reopen your exercise book as you will remember what you've missed.

c) Test practice



Taken on board feedback from teachers – your children have had work marked by their teacher, using this feedback to help improve work for next time is big part of being ready tests.

Marking Criteria

Standard	5	4	3	2	1	0
Do you understand the task and the question?						
Do you provide an answer to the question and use the correct language?						
Do you make a statement about the question and what you think is the answer?						
Do you use the correct language?						
Total						

Using mark criteria sheets from the teacher – teachers provide a marking sheet to go with any extended end of unit tests, examining this mark criteria sheet will help your child understand what the teacher is marking against.

P Point	Sum up the main idea in your paragraph.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the point clearly stated? Is the point relevant to the question? Is the point supported by evidence? Is the point clearly stated at the end of the paragraph?
E Evidence	Provide evidence for the point you are making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any examples of this in the text? Are there any quotes from the text? Are there any statistics or facts? Are there any examples of this in the text? Are there any quotes from the text? Are there any statistics or facts?
E Explanation	Why is the question important? What effect does the question have on the reader? Why has the writer used this technique?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does this show...? Does this suggest...? Does this imply...? Does this affect the reader because...? Does the writer use this technique to...? Does this affect the reader because...? Does the writer use this technique to...? Does this affect the reader because...?

Planning paragraphs – often teachers will let your children know what the question will be on, your child could be planning to use their book and planning the paragraphs.


Effective Paragraphing

Non-fiction texts are always divided up into paragraphs. You've probably heard this word 'paragraphs' before, but what does it actually mean?

What is a paragraph?

Why are paragraphs important in any piece of writing?

Evaluate how a writer can use paragraphing to have an impact on their audience. Provide examples.



Writing practice paragraphs – to really push your child and raise expectation practicing the paragraph as fully written out paragraphs.

Writing shorter exam answers in timed conditions

Useful revision tools:

At KS4 individual faculties have their own advice about revision, however the below list includes recommendations that some of our Sixth Form students found useful through their revision at GCSE.

[link to Year 11 curriculum booklet]

<https://senecalearning.com/en-GB/>

<https://www.physicsandmathstutor.com/>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCM2vdqz-7e4HAuzhpFuRY8w>

<https://www.mathsgenie.co.uk/>

General Guide to revision

[CGP Revision Book](#)