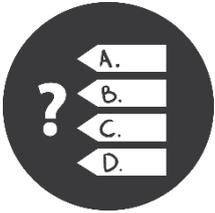
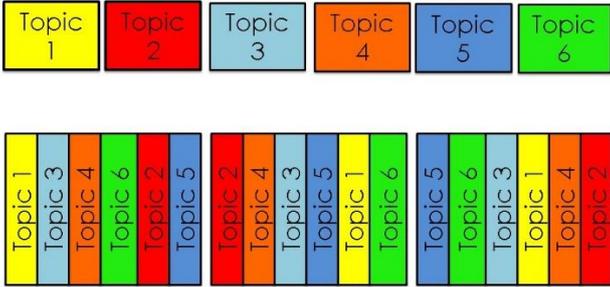


THE 'DO'S AND DON'TS' OF REVISION

A GUIDE FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS



Over the last century, cognitive psychologists have studied memory through a variety of experiments and have deciphered which techniques are most and least effective for aiding long term retention. Believe it or not, our intuition is often incorrect and both teachers and students alike opt for methods that may not be as effective. Take a look at the list below and see how you might improve your revision:

DO 	DON'T 
<p style="text-align: center;">1. SELF-TEST</p> <p>Cognitive psychologists have found self-testing to be a highly effective way of retaining and recalling factual knowledge. This can be done through a variety of recall quizzes e.g. using flash cards and answering multiple choice quizzes or short answer questions.</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">1. HIGHLIGHT INFORMATION</p> <p>The whole notion of learning is about making connections between information. If we highlight, we begin to isolate information. The research has found time and time again, that highlighting notes has no impact on retention.</p> 
<p style="text-align: center;">2. SPACE AND INTERLEAVE PRACTICE</p> <p>When we learn, we forget; unfortunately, this is fact. Believe it or not, if we space out our practice and revisit information in a random way (interleave), we can actually improve our retention of information. In fact, revisiting a topic around 20-30 days apart is optimum for retention.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Look at the image below for how you may consider spacing and interleaving practice.</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">2. BLOCK PRACTICE</p> <p>We all tend to 'cram' for our exams. The problem is, we quickly forget what we've learnt. As soon as the exam is over, so to is our ability to retain information. 7 hours of solid revision is nowhere near as effective as 1 hour a day for a week.</p>

(Image courtesy of @LearningSpy)

3. PRACTISE THINGS YOU'LL BE TESTED ON

Sounds obvious doesn't it? However, occasionally this does not happen. For example, if the exam will involve writing long answer questions, the last thing you want to be doing in your revision is making posters, or watching YouTube videos. You need to practise writing long answer questions.



3. TAKE NOTES ON A LAPTOP

Scientists have [found](#) that taking notes by hand is a far more effective way of improving the long term retention of information, compared to taking notes on a laptop. Where possible, try to avoid taking notes on a laptop and use handwritten notes, accompanied by visual representations and organisers to support learning.



4. ASKING WHY?

Particularly useful for factual information, being inquisitive and looking for explanations about the information we're learning actually strengthens retention. A sizable body of evidence suggests that prompting students to answer "Why?" questions can improve learning. For example, "Why does it make sense that...?" or "Why is this true?"



4. RE-READ

There is little evidence to support the effect of re-reading lesson notes, yet hours can be wasted going through the pages of information acquired over the year. The opportunity cost is therefore very low and it is worth avoiding this in order to use more proven techniques.



5. SLEEP

Ensuring that you get sufficient sleep is essential when learning/revision. Neuroscientists have [found](#) that naps are also useful in allowing the brain to consolidate learning, thus improve long term retention.



5. LATE NIGHT REVISION

Irregular sleeping patterns do not benefit the learning process, nor does working on screens for prolonged periods. If you are falling asleep on the books/laptop, then you need to consider how you might establish a better routine.



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