



# Achieving your Potential

## Key Stage 5

The first step to succeeding at Key Stage 5 and in your A Level exams is by making sure you are doing everything you should be during and for your lessons.

Make sure you can answer yes to the following questions for **all** your subjects.

If you can't, that's your first target for improvement!

- *When you enter the classroom, do you get settled and started straight away?*
- *Do you always have the equipment you need for your lessons with you?*
- *During the lesson, are you focussed 100% of the time?*
- *Are you an active (rather than passive) learner?*
- *Do you contribute during whole class discussions/group and pair work?*
- *Do you always try your best, even if it's difficult?*
- *Does your behaviour allow everyone in the class to learn?*
- *Do you ensure you self-assess work when you can, using green pen to make corrections?*
- *Do you respond to all teacher feedback (either verbal or written) as fully as possible?*
- *Do you always complete your homework on time and to the best of your ability?*
- *Do you seek clarification if you don't understand something?*

However, just doing the above doesn't guarantee that you will achieve the highest grades/the grades that you want in your GCSEs. **You also need to study independently.** The rest of this document is dedicated to helping you do this as effectively and as efficiently as possible.

Also, don't forget that it's really important to have a healthy school-life balance!

Make sure you take time to:

- Get enough sleep
- Eat well and drink lots of water
- Exercise regularly
- Spend time with family and friends
- Partake in some extra-curricular activities
- Take some time for yourself!

# Independent Study at Key Stage 5

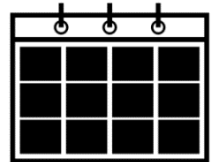
For some students, studying for their A-Levels is the first time that they've really had to buckle down and do some serious systematic work to achieve the best that they can.

Luckily, cognitive science and general experience has shown that there are some common approaches that can be applied to most (if not all) subjects.

There are four main steps to an excellent study strategy:

## 1. Plan

Work out what you need to revise and when you need to revise it by. Organise yourself and get your revision resources ready.



## 2. Understand

Strengthen your understanding of content by reviewing skills and content. Capture what you know in a way you can use to help you learn later.



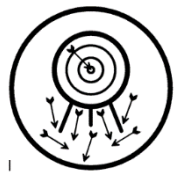
## 3. Learn

This is the hardest part. Learn the key facts and information off by heart, so you can recall it with ease in the exam. This will free up space in your working memory, allowing you to tackle questions that are more complex.



## 4. Practise

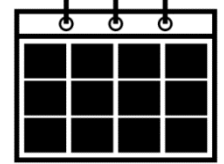
Apply what you know to exam style questions. Solidify your knowledge and master your skills through using the concepts that you have learned both familiar and unfamiliar contexts.



**To achieve the best grade that you can, you need to complete all four of these steps – there are no short cuts!** However, each subject will require different levels of each step; for example, Maths may require more practise, whilst English Language might need more of a focus on understanding and Biology may need more time spent on learning off by heart.

This document aims to help you study for your A Level exams across Key Stage 5; the first part will run through some common tips and tricks for all A Level subjects for the four sections listed above, before delving into subject specific hints and tips (including links to recommended websites and resources) in the second part.

# Step 1: Plan



The first thing you need to do is make a plan of action! This could be for general revision across multiple courses in the lead up to a set of exams or could be a more specific plan to improve in a certain subject.

## 1. Prepare to F.A.I.L. (First Attempt In Learning)

Failure is a vital part of learning. While in some subjects you may thrive and understand everything with ease, there will undoubtedly be some subjects where this is not the case. There is absolutely no shame in this! The hardest step is the first step, and remember you can always talk to your teachers, form tutor, head of year and any other adult in school, as well as your friends and family! More info on this can be found here: [Learning to Learn – Prepare to F.A.I.L.](#)

## 2. Prepare your study space & study time

Make sure you have somewhere to work with minimal distractions. This could be at home, but could also be elsewhere, e.g., the LRC. Also set out when you will study – little and often is better than cramming everything into one long session! More info on this can be found here: [Learning to Learn – Working at Home](#).

## 3. Know your timescales

When does this studying need to be done by? E.g., when are the mocks that you are studying for, or when is the end of unit test that this skill will be tested in? If there is no specific timescale to work to, make one for yourself – you are much more likely to study if you have a deadline.

## 4. Make sure you know what you need to know

Ensure you have a copy of the specification/topic list/ key vocabulary/whatever it is that you need to learn ready, so you can organise your revision.

## 5. Work out what you need to work on

An excellent way of doing this is through traffic lighting – code the specification (or similar) using red, orange & green pens to highlight what areas you feel most and least comfortable with. More info on how to do this can be found here: [Learning to Learn – Traffic Lights](#).

## 6. Make a plan, making sure to prioritise the most difficult topics first

We all know that it's tempting to study and revise the things we find easy! However, to make the biggest gains, you need to give work on the things you find the hardest. Look at your red topics first and review them more often than those you find easier (although

don't completely ignore the green areas!). Using the Pomodoro technique can be really useful if you find it tricky to concentrate for longer periods - more info on how to do this can be found here: [Learning to Learn – Pomodoro](#) .

## 7. Get your resources ready

It can be tempting to spend most of your study session finding the things you need. If you have them all to hand beforehand, it will be much harder to procrastinate! This could be your folder/exercise book, a textbook/revision guide or online resources. A list of useful general resources can be found below, with **other subject specific websites listed on the subject specific pages at the end of this document.**

## Useful Online Revision Resources

- Exam Boards:
  - [AQA – education charity providing GCSEs, A-levels and support](#)
  - [Edexcel | About Edexcel | Pearson qualifications](#)
  - [OCR - awarding body for A Levels, GCSEs, Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Technicals and other qualifications](#)
  - [Eduqas | Exam Board UK](#)
- General Revision:
  - [Free Homework & Revision for A Level, GCSE, KS3 & KS2 \(senecalearning.com\)](#)
  - [Revision Notes, Past Papers & Topic Questions | Save My Exams](#)
  - [Revision World - Free GCSE & A-Level Revision Resources](#)
- Past Papers
  - Exam board websites above
  - [A-Level Exam Past Papers - Revision World](#)
  - [Past Papers - PMT \(physicsandmathstutor.com\)](#) (not just Physics & Maths!)
- Quizzing
  - [Learning tools, flashcards, and textbook solutions | Quizlet](#)
  - [Anki - powerful, intelligent flashcards \(ankiweb.net\)](#)
- Online textbooks:
  - [Kerboodle](#)
  - [The UK's Favourite Educational Books | CGP Books](#)  
*(many of these are available at cost price on ParentPay)*

## Step 2: Understand



Before learning the content off by heart, it's important to **understand** the concepts that you will be examined in. The majority of this will happen in your lessons, but for those topics and subtopics that need a little more work the following might help:

- **Ask a teacher for clarification**

This could be during or after a lesson or could be via email. They may be able to arrange a time to go through the topic with you or might be able to point you to extra resources that could help your independent study.

- **Read the information in a different format**

Sometimes, reading a different explanation of a topic can help it click. Reading a different textbook/revision guide or finding the information on websites such as BBC Bitesize or Seneca Learning could help here.

- **Watch a video explanation**

YouTube can be a great resource, as sometimes hearing a different explanation or seeing live animations/graphics can help solidify your understanding. There's also the benefit that you can pause/rewatch. Take care though – don't get distracted by other videos, and don't fall into the trap that watching YouTube videos is helping you learn the information; it can be an easy way of tricking yourself into thinking you're doing effective revision!

- **Organise your thoughts in some way:**

Making revision cards/mind maps/notes from your resources to organise your thoughts can help make links between topics and can form connections. However, beware of simply copying notes down verbatim – you need to be doing something new with the information!

- **Attend a revision session**

This is a great option if one is available, as you get your teacher's expertise!

## Step 3: Learn



This is the step that is the most boring and potentially the most difficult, so it is the one that many students try to ‘skip’... you need to **learn** content off by heart! This is where **active revision** is important – the act of trying to remember something without looking it up and then checking your answers.

[Retrieval Practice](#) (i.e. the process of actively trying to remember something) is scientifically proven to be an excellent learning tool. Some examples of activities that can help include:

- **Quizzes**

Quizzing yourself is a great way to learn – it utilises the ‘testing effect’. Lots of quizzes can be found online, or you can make and then use them yourself!

- **Using flashcards**

Similar to quizzing, this is a great way to strengthen core knowledge. Either use flashcards you’ve made yourself (although don’t fall into the trap of spending hours making them then not using them!) or find ready-made cards online. You can also use apps such as Anki or Quizlet to help with this – these have the added bonus of automatically repeating the questions you found difficult more often than the ones you found easy, although you can do this for yourself if you combine your flashcards with a traffic light system! More info on this can be found here: [Learning to Learn - Flashcards](#).

- **Mind maps/brain dumps**

Make a mind map from scratch, or simply write everything you can remember about a topic down on a piece of paper. Then, check what you’ve remembered against a previously made exemplar or a revision resource. Another example of this is a read-write-review – more info on this can be found here: [Learning to Learn – Read/Write/Review](#).

Other well-researched methods of improving learning include:

- [Dual Coding — The Learning Scientists](#)
- [Concrete Examples — The Learning Scientists](#)
- [Elaboration — The Learning Scientists](#)
- [Interleaving — The Learning Scientists](#)
- [Spaced Practice — The Learning Scientists](#)

Notice how this list does **not** include rereading/highlighting/writing notes – this is not an efficient way of learning content, as it doesn’t make you think! A good general rule of thumb here is as follows: **if it feels easy, it’s probably not working!**

## Step 4: Practise



The final step is to **practise** applying the knowledge that you've learned. The easiest way to do this at GCSE and beyond is through the use of **past paper questions**, either individually or in whole papers. These can be found in a variety of places, including the exam board websites.

When using past papers, we recommend the following plan of action to make the most of them as you can:

1. **Answer as much as you can from memory to start with**, without looking back at notes. Sometimes, it will be appropriate to complete this in timed conditions, as you need to get used to that!
2. Once you are sure you have done all you can, **allow yourself the use of your revision resources** and go back through the paper with a **different colour pen**, adding in anything that you can now answer with that support. This will show you the difference between what you simply understand versus the content you know and understand.
3. Now find the mark scheme for the questions. Go through with a third colour, **marking and correcting your answers**. Make a note of any hints and tips you pick up.
4. Make sure you **savour your mistakes** – they are great opportunities to learn! More info on how you can do this can be found here: [Learning to Learn – Managing Mistakes](#).

**By the time you get to your A Level Exams, you should have completed every past paper that is available for your specification.** For many subjects, completing questions from other specifications is also useful if you run out!

# Independent Study at Key Stage 5

## Subject Specific Advice

Apart from the general advice & resources listed above, the following pages detail some extra subject specific hints and tips for succeeding at A Level.

They are listed alphabetically.

Remember, if in doubt ask your teacher - they are the best resource you have!

Don't forget to follow the advice and act on the learning targets they give you for any formally assessed work (usually found on yellow paper).



## Art & Photography

Exam board & link to specification: Art ([AQA](#)) & Photography ([AQA](#))

Find past papers easily here: n

Other useful online resources:

- [Pinterest](#)
- [The Tate](#)
- [National Portrait Gallery](#)
- [ArtNet](#)

To further improve in Art & Photography you could:

- Plan for next steps using a mind map and mood board and identify areas for further research for new project.
- Take a wide selection of creative and imaginative photos that clearly link to the chosen theme so you are able to draw from primary sources.
- Identify and explain why a certain artist's work has been selected as an influence and how you intend to use this within your new project.
- Use artists as inspiration and create imaginative pieces that are in a similar style, or use similar working methods, and combine this with your primary sourced images.
- Develop your use of presentation within your sketchbook making sure each page is as visual as possible.
- Develop your use of written annotation within your sketchbook.
- Evaluate projects in detail and highlight areas of success and areas for improvement in preparation for your next project.
- Utilise all of your development and preparation work so you can create a highly individual and personal final piece.

## Biology

Exam board & link to specification: [AQA](#)

Find past papers easily here: [AQA | AS and A-level | Biology | Assessment resources](#)

Other useful online resources:

- [Snapshot Science](#)
- [ChemicalBook - Chemical Search Engine](#)
- [A Level Biology | If It's Green Or Moves \(ifitsgreenormoves.com\)](#)
- [Biologymad.com – A-Level study site and lots of resources | i-Biology](#)

To further improve in Biology you could:

- Prepare yourself for lessons by
  - re-reading your notes from the previous lesson
  - making sure you have all notes, textbooks and writing materials with you.
  - reading ahead in your textbook
- Learn specialist vocabulary. Make yourself a glossary of technical terms and write out the definitions. Practice using these words in your answers to questions.
- Take an active role in lessons. Ask questions if you are not sure what your teacher expects you to do. Try to answer at least one question per lesson – do not worry if you are wrong – sometimes this will enable you to learn much more effectively.
- Don't rush off at the end of a lesson. Take the time to ask questions about your work – or simply stay to listen to the questions other students ask.
- Work with a friend in private study periods – discuss your work, practice answering questions orally and help each other with problems.
- Refer to the specification when you are revising to make sure you cover the main points.
- Learn the key points in each section -using your notes and revision guide
- Learn by writing out a summary and making diagrams
- Use your text book well. Always read about the work that has been covered in class and answer the questions in the textbook – there are often answers in the back of the book for you to check your answers.
- Practice past papers. Your teacher will give these to you – particularly in the period leading up to a module exam and they are available on the AQA web-site. But doing the questions is not enough! You should use the published mark schemes to check your answers and then re-write them to improve them where necessary. You can also look at the examiners reports on the AQA website – this will tell you the common mistakes made by the candidates. Whenever you find a question you cannot do ASK YOUR TEACHER for help.
- Subscribe to or borrow copies of Biological Sciences Review to read to increase your understanding.

## Business

Exam board & link to specification: [Edexcel A Level Business - Specification](#)

Find past papers easily here: [Edexcel A Level Business - Past Papers](#)

Other useful online resources:

- [Tutor2U A level Business - Notes and Revision Videos](#)
- [Tutor2U A level Business - Collections by Topic \(Alphabetical List\)](#)
- [Seneca - A Level Business](#)
- [Takingthebiz - A Level Revision Videos and Podcasts](#)
- [BBC Business News](#)

To further improve in Business, you could:

In lessons:

- Ensure you arrive on time and prepared with the equipment you need and any homework due, fully completed.
- Be engaged throughout the lesson and participate - the best learning is active not passive. Ask, and answer, questions to clarify and test knowledge and understanding; also, participate in group work - make a contribution. This demonstrates the right approach to learning.
- Take, or annotate, notes, to record what your teacher is saying in expanding and explaining concepts or giving examples - this will enable effective, thorough revision.
- Be focussed and self-motivated when given time and independence to complete a task; ensure any worksheets are completed to aid future revision.
- Seek/read/listen to feedback on completed work - always look to improve your answers until you achieve the highest grades.
- Have high expectations of yourself - don't rush your work, write neatly, do homework on separate sheets of paper and aim for your minimum target grade, never accepting, or expecting, less than 50% for any piece of work.

Outside of lessons:

- Buy a revision guide or textbooks as directed by your teacher.
- Set up a subject file with sections that follow the Specification; make sure that this is kept up to date and organised. Have additional sections for the Specification, homework and assessments.
- Annotate lesson notes with additional information from textbooks, revision guides or on-line resources.
- Before a lesson, read over notes from previous lessons so that you are prepared for the next stage of your learning

- Familiarise yourself with key terms - make a glossary on-line (so that you can sort information alphabetically) with definitions, and test knowledge using Seneca Learning.
- Add depth to your subject knowledge through wider reading on websites such as BBC Business.

Before (and during) the exams:

- Plan your revision - use a checklist linked to the specification to ensure all topics are covered.
- Create flashcards or revision notes on key topics, and use mind maps to create links from one part of the syllabus to another; the best A level answers will include several linked concepts from across the specification.
- Absolutely use past paper questions, especially for longer form questions (8, 10, 12 and 20 mark questions); use Mark Schemes and Examiners' Reports to reflect on your work and ask your teachers to mark and provide feedback on completed questions. All questions are available through the Student SharePoint and have been organised and linked to the Specification.
- Focus on the quality and depth of application to the case studies provided; the best answers come from the context provided rather than the textbook.
- Make sure you understand the requirement of each of the different types of question in the exam.
- Watch your timing - work to 1 minute per mark; this will allow you time to read the extracts and plan long form answers.

## Chemistry

Exam board & link to specification: [AQA](#)

Find past papers easily here: [AQA | AS and A-level | Chemistry | Assessment resources](#)

Other useful online resources:

- Chemguide (<https://www.chemguide.co.uk/>): Detailed notes, tutorials, and interactive resources specifically tailored to A-level Chemistry.
- Learn Chemistry (<https://www.rsc.org/learn-chemistry>): Royal Society of Chemistry's site with interactive simulations, videos, worksheets, and quizzes.
- A-Level Chemistry Revision (<https://alevelchemistryrevision.co.uk/>): Concise revision notes, practice questions, and topic summaries for AQA A-level Chemistry.
- Seneca Learning (<https://www.senecalearning.com/>): Interactive courses aligned with AQA exam board, covering topics with quizzes and flashcards.
- Physics & Maths Tutor (<https://www.physicsandmathstutor.com/>): Offers AQA-specific resources, including topic-based revision notes, exam-style questions, and video tutorials.

To further improve in Chemistry you could:

- Review and consolidate class notes: Regularly go through your class notes, highlight key concepts, and create summary sheets or flashcards to reinforce your understanding.
- Complete past exam papers: Practice solving past exam papers to familiarise yourself with the question format and improve your exam technique. Analyse your answers and identify areas for improvement.
- Read textbooks and alternative resources: Supplement your class notes by reading the Kerboodle textbook or online resources such as ChemRevise or ChemGuide to gain a deeper understanding of the topics covered in class.
- Watch educational videos and lectures: Utilise online platforms such as YouTube or educational websites that offer chemistry tutorials and lectures to enhance your understanding of complex concepts. Great examples include MrERintoul or MrR Chemistry on YouTube.
- Complete additional topic-based practice questions: Look for extra practice questions and problem-solving exercises beyond what is covered in class to challenge yourself and reinforce your understanding of different topics.
- Join online discussion forums or study groups: Engage in online forums or create study groups (with your friends and classmates) where you can discuss challenging topics, ask questions, and exchange knowledge. Example websites for online discussions include The Student Room ([thestudentroom.co.uk](http://thestudentroom.co.uk)) and Physics and Maths Tutor ([physicsandmathstutor.com](http://physicsandmathstutor.com)).

- Read around the subject: Explore real-world case studies related to chemistry, such as environmental issues, pharmaceutical developments, or chemical engineering projects. Analyse the scientific principles and concepts involved, evaluate the outcomes or implications, and discuss the broader significance of the case study.
- Create mind maps or concept diagrams: Use visual aids such as mind maps or concept diagrams to organise your knowledge, interconnect different concepts, and improve your ability to recall information during exams.
- Utilise online simulations and virtual labs: Access online simulations and virtual labs that replicate chemistry experiments or phenomena to deepen your understanding of practical aspects of the subject. Example websites for online simulations and virtual labs include PhET Interactive Simulations ([phet.colorado.edu](https://phet.colorado.edu)) and ChemCollective ([chemcollective.org](https://chemcollective.org)).
- Seek additional support from teachers: If you encounter difficulties in specific areas, don't hesitate to seek help from your teachers once you have tried things on this list.

## Computer Science

Exam board & link to specification: [AS and A Level - Computer Science - H046, H446 - OCR](#)

Find past papers easily here: [Past papers materials finder - OCR](#)

Other useful online resources:

- [A level topics — Isaac Computer Science](#)
- [Craig'n'Dave - YouTube](#)
- Resources in our MS Team

To further improve in Computer Science you could:

In lessons:

- Watch revision videos from Craig & Daves Youtube Channel
- Pay particular attention to sessions on exam technique and question interpretation.
- Attempt the Worksheets and Homeworks from our CS Team.
- Ensure that your physical folders/classnotebook are up to date with theory notes and the end of unit tests.
- Use the Algorithms textbook and attempt to answer questions that will aid Unit 2.

When revising/programming:

- Look at the feedback from previous assessments, especially with regards to where you dropped marks.
- Revisit weaker units so you can be confident of performing consistently.
- Utilise the past paper pack you have been given, ensuring you mark any papers attempted using the mark schemes.
- Spend quality time on your programming skills as this will help his paper 2 and future endeavours.
- Complete end of unit questions in the textbook & answer questions from the zigzag guides.
- Use the Unity tutorials from the academy page on Unity and complete the required amount of hours for each module.
- Spend at least a minimum of 10 hours a week upskilling yourself for the NEA project in C# and Unity.

When answering exam questions:

- Pay particular attention to exam technique and wording. Use the model answers from the text book as guidance
- Structure your answers concisely so you don't lose time or talk yourself out of a correct line.

## Economics

Exam board & link to specification: [Edexcel A level Economics A - Specification](#)

Find past papers easily here: [Edexcel A level Economics A - Past Papers, Mark Schemes and Examiners' Reports](#)

Other useful online resources:

- [Econplusdal - An extensive range of knowledge and exam technique vidoes](#)
- [Seneca Learning - Edexcel A level Economics A](#)
- [Tutor2U Edexcel A Level Economics A - Notes and Revision Videos](#)
- [Tutor2U Edexcel A Level Economics A - Collections by Topic \(alphabetical list\)](#)
- [Tutor2U - Edexcel A level Economics A - A full set of Yr12 on-line lessons](#)
- [Tutor2U Edexcel A Level Economics A - A range of wider reading enrichment tasks for Yr12 and Yr13](#)
- [Physics and Maths Tutor - A full set of Edexcel A level Economics A Revision Notes for Yr12 and Yr13](#)
- [Economics Help Edexcel A Level Economics A - Detailed explanatory notes on all aspects of the specification](#)
- [BBC Economics](#)

To further improve in Economics, you could:

In lessons:

- Ensure you arrive on time and prepared with the equipment you need and any homework due, fully completed.
- Be engaged throughout the lesson and participate - the best learning is active not passive. Ask, and answer, questions to clarify and test knowledge and understanding; also, participate in group work - make a contribution. This demonstrates the right approach to learning.
- Take, or annotate, notes, to record what your teacher is saying in expanding and explaining concepts or giving examples - this will enable effective, thorough revision.
- Be focussed and self-motivated when given time and independence to complete a task; ensure any worksheets are completed to aid future revision.
- Seek/read/listen to feedback on completed work - always look to improve your answers until you achieve the highest grades.
- Have high expectations of yourself - don't rush your work, write neatly, do homework on separate sheets of paper and aim for your minimum target grade, never accepting, or expecting, less than 50% for any piece of work.



## Outside of lessons:

- Buy a Revision Guide or Textbooks as directed by your teacher.
- Set up a subject file with sections that follow the Specification; make sure that this is kept up to date and organised. Have additional sections for the Specification, homework and assessments.
- Annotate lesson notes with additional information from textbooks, revision guides or on-line resources.
- Before a lesson, read over notes from previous lessons so that you are prepared for the next stage of your learning
- Familiarise yourself with key terms - make a Glossary on-line (so that you can sort information alphabetically) with definitions, and test knowledge using Seneca Learning.
- Add depth to your subject knowledge through wider reading on websites such as BBC Economics, or through a subscription to The Economist (this can be either on-line or in hard copy). Regularly read a broadsheet newspaper, such as The Times, Guardian or Telegraph – note that the Guardian is free on-line, but all other newspapers are subscription based.

## Before, and during, the Exams:

- Plan your revision - use a checklist linked to the Specification to ensure all topics are covered.
- Create flashcards or revision notes on key topics, and use Mind Maps to create links from one part of the syllabus to another; the best A level answers will include several linked concepts from across the specification.
- Absolutely use past paper questions, especially for longer form questions (10, 12, 15, 20 and 25 mark questions); use Mark Schemes and Examiners' Reports to reflect on your work and ask your teachers to mark and provide feedback on completed questions.
- Practice drawing diagrams freehand - label fully and show movement of curves.
- Focus on the quality and depth of application to the case studies provided; the best answers come from the context provided rather than the textbook.
- Make sure you understand the requirement of each of the different types of question in the exam.
- Watch your timing - work to 1 minute per mark; this will allow you time to read the extracts and plan long form answers.

## English Language

Exam board & link to specification: [AQA | English | AS and A-level | English Language](#)

Find past papers easily here: [AQA | AS and A-level | English Language | Assessment resources](#)

Other useful online resources:

- [Linguistics Research Digest \(linguistics-research-digest.blogspot.com\)](http://linguistics-research-digest.blogspot.com)  
A fantastic website run by the Linguistics Department of Queen Mary, University of London aimed at A Level students
- [English & Media Centre | Home \(englishandmedia.co.uk\)](http://englishandmedia.co.uk)
- [Englishlangsfx.blogspot.com](http://Englishlangsfx.blogspot.com)
- [The York English Language Toolkit](#)
- [Talk of the Toon | Home \(ncl.ac.uk\)](http://ncl.ac.uk)

To further improve in English Language you could:

- Make sure you understand what each assessment objective is asking of you. Be sure that you understand which assessment objectives are assessing each question.
- Be sure that you revise language terminology and language frameworks. These are: lexis and semantics, grammar, phonetics, phonology and prosodics, graphology, pragmatics and discourse.
- As well as completing past papers, practise analysing texts that you come across in daily life. These could be non-fiction articles, blogs, websites.
- Read the course textbook.
- Thoroughly learn all research, theories and case studies.
- Read eMag articles.
- Sign up to the Linguistic Research Digest and read about contemporary Linguistic studies that you can use in your essays
- Regularly read a broadsheet newspaper like The Guardian in order to keep up to date with current affairs.

## English Literature

Exam board & link to specification: [AQA | English | AS and A-level | English Literature B](#)

Find past papers easily here: [AQA | AS and A-level | English Literature B | Assessment resources](#)

Other useful online resources:

- [Language & Literature \(bl.uk\)](#)
- [English & Media Centre | Home \(englishandmedia.co.uk\)](#)

To further improve in English Literature you could:

- Make sure you understand what each assessment objective is asking of you. Be sure that you understand which assessment objectives are assessing each question.
- It is crucial that you read other literature texts and not just the ones that we study, so that you can confidently incorporate wider ideas into your essays.
- Remember that constructing a clear argument in answer to the question set in the examination is essential: there should be a clear step by step argument, showing that your interpretation of the texts is a convincing one.
- It is essential that all examination answers explicitly and clearly engage with the author, explaining in each quotation what the author is doing to the reader's or audience's feelings or thinking. Keep asking yourself: What is the author up to? How is the author manipulating the reader's thinking?
- You should explore alternative interpretations where appropriate; link ideas together into a cohesive whole; make comments that are consistently relevant to the steer of the task; consider covering less ground but in greater depth and explain all points clearly, justifying them fully, not just making unsupported assertions.
- Read literary criticism in order to explore other views and consider different interpretations of texts.
- Specifically focus on developing AO2 skills by producing a selection of annotated key quotes for each literature text, focusing on meaning, effect and language devices.
- Revise critical vocabulary.
- Research contextual, social and historical information about the texts we are studying.

## French

Exam board & link to specification: [AS and A Level French | Edugas](#)

Find past papers easily here: [AS and A Level French | Edugas](#)

Other useful online resources:

- [Toute l'information internationale en direct | Euronews](#)
- [Accueil - 1jour1actu.com](#)
- [Learn Languages with Music Videos, Lyrics and Karaoke! \(lyricstraining.com\)](#)
- [News in Slow French - French Podcast](#)
- [Home Page || Conjuguemos](#)

To further improve in French you could:

- Keep exposing yourself to French online using websites like those listed above and by watching the news bulletins on arte tv (journal junior) and tf1 (20h).
- Make sure your phone is set to French on settings.
- Spend at least 4 hours a week on French homework.
- Test yourself regularly on corrections (look, say, cover, write, check)
- Review your Learning Targets regularly and follow through on them
- Revise your verb conjugations (especially 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular and plural). Use conjuguemos online to test yourself with the randomiser once you are familiar with the rules of conjugating each tense.
- Attend all sessions with the Language Assistant and be proactive; arrive with questions (e.g. expressions and idioms you want to use in your work) that you want to ask and if you cannot attend, inform them in advance and try to rearrange if possible.
- Keep testing yourself on vocab from your cahier de vocabulaire, and from the specification lists on quizlet and the lists at the back of Elan.
- Be proactive with grammar learning; if unsure look it up in the grammar section at the back of the textbook or online. If still unsure, ask the teacher.
- Pronunciation: ask the Language Assistant or your teacher how well you articulate when speaking French and which sounds you need to work on most, then record yourself speaking, listen back and try to improve them.
- Regularly rewatch/reread (parts of) the set book and film so you know them well.
- Build up a bank of concise key quotations/scenes from the book/film and test yourself.
- Build up a bank of AO4 facts about French society from your class notes and wider reading. For topics you seem to have fewer facts on, do some more reading and seek out some of your own.
- Keep a record of transferable sophisticated structures that you can keep using in your card discussions and essays.

## Geography

Exam board & link to specification: [AS and A Level - Geography - H081, H481 - OCR](#)

Find past papers easily here: [AS and A Level - Geography - H081, H481 - OCR](#)

Other useful online resources:

- [TED - YouTube](#)
- [Browse All | Gresham College](#)

To further improve in Geography you could:

- Prepare yourself for lessons by
  - re-reading your notes from the previous lesson
  - making sure you have all the relevant notes, resources and equipment
  - reading ahead in your textbook to ensure you are familiar with the material to be covered
  - Ensure you have completed all the independent study tasks / suggested reading
- Learn specialist vocabulary. Make yourself a glossary of technical terms and write out the definitions. Practice using these words in your answers to questions.
- Take an active role in lessons. Ask questions if you are not sure what your teacher expects you to do. Try to answer at least one question per lesson – do not worry if you are wrong – sometimes giving the wrong answer will enable you to learn much more effectively.
- Work with a friend in private study periods – discuss your work, practice answering questions orally and help each other with problems.
- Make good use of student Sharepoint resources
- Refer to the specification when you are revising to make sure you cover the main points.
- Learn the key points in each section -using your notes and revision guide
- Learn by writing out a summary and making diagrams
- Use your text book well. Always read about the work that has been covered in class and answer the questions in the textbook.
- Practice past papers. They are available on the OCR web-site. But doing the questions is not enough! You should use the published mark schemes to check your answers and then re-write them to improve them where necessary. You can also look at the examiners reports on the OCR website – this will tell you the common mistakes made by the candidates. Whenever you find a question you cannot do ASK YOUR TEACHER for help.
- Use the weekly lunch time support sessions.
- Use independent study periods wisely and productively, it doesn't all need to be writing – you could watch relevant Tedtalks or Gresham College lectures

## German

Exam board & link to specification: [AS and A Level German | Eduqas](#)

Find past papers easily here: [AS and A Level German | Eduqas](#)

Other useful online resources:

- [Arbeitsblätter DaF](#) - lots of worksheets for general practice on vocabulary and grammar
- [Lingolia](#) - lots of grammar reference materials and activities; reading & listening comprehension
- [Slow German](#) - short podcasts on theme of German news, current affairs and cultural events. Each podcast has a transcript (can be saved/printed as PDF).
- [Internetradio Deutschland](#) - link to lots of German radio stations
- [verbix.com](#)
- [WordReference.com](#)

To further improve in German you could:

- Use social media to follow German news and current affairs so you can read / listen 'little and often'.
- Revise verb conjugations regularly; when you encounter a new verb, note it down with other key parts, such as its past participle.
- Attend all sessions with the Language Assistant and be proactive; arrive with questions (e.g. expressions and idioms you want to use in your work) that you want to ask and if you cannot attend, inform them in advance and try to rearrange if possible.
- Ensure you have well-organised vocabulary notes from classwork and independent study; revisit your vocab lists regularly to reinforce your language.
- Be proactive with grammar learning; if unsure look it up in the grammar section at the back of the textbook or online.
- Regularly rewatch/reread (parts of) the set book and film so you know them well.
- Build up a bank of concise key quotations/scenes from both book and film and test yourself regularly.
- Build up a bank of AO4 facts about German-speaking cultural issues from your class notes and wider reading. Links above (eg. Slow German) and social media links are ideal for this.
- Keep a record of transferable sophisticated structures that you can keep using in your card discussions and essays.

## History

Exam board & link to specification: [AQA | History | AS and A-level | History](#)

*The following options have been taken:*

- *Component 1 (Breadth Study): Option D – Stuart Britain and the Crisis of Monarchy 1603 – 1702*
- *Component 2 (Depth Study): Option J – America: A Nation Divided 1845 – 1877*
- *NEA – Civil Rights in the USA 1877-1965*

Find past papers easily here: [AQA | AS and A-level | History | Assessment resources](#)

Other useful online resources:

- For the middle years of the Monarchy course: [BCW Project :: British Civil Wars, Commonwealth & Protectorate 1638-1660 \(bcw-project.org\)](#)

To further improve in History you could:

- Be 'present' in every lesson – history is very difficult and if you switch off a miss the explanation of key concepts you will find it very difficult to keep up with the learning
- Ask questions in class – have an inquiring mindset – history MUST be about asking questions as well as finding the answers
- Create timelines and glossaries for each topic as a standard revision activity before you plan or complete past essays
- Devise quizzes for each topic/lesson - make sure you write the answers to each question in a different colour and ask someone at home to test you.
- Go over the content of each lesson or week's lessons at the end of the day or week.
- Read the White King by Leanda de Lisle and the Battle Cry of Freedom by James McPherson. Read as much as you can around all three courses.
- We will plan and complete several essays in years 12 and 13 but we cannot plan all the past paper essay questions. If you complete any extra essays make sure you hand them in for feedback
- Complete all of the independent learning programme for history.
- Attend the Friday afternoon year 13 support sessions. (Monarchy)
- Listen to history podcasts when you are walking the dog(s) or just walking! The Rest is History is brilliant – try these three for starters: [The Rest Is History: Civil War on Apple Podcasts](#) AND [The Rest Is History: 143. The Trial of Charles I Part 1 on Apple Podcasts](#) AND [The Rest Is History: American Civil War: The Causes on Apple Podcasts](#)
- Read and make notes on Better Day Coming in the summer holidays of year 12/13 - this is the core text for completing your NEA

## Exam tips

- Focus on answering the essay question directly and consistently. Don't write everything you know and don't describe and narrate.
- Use the SEA technique – statement – evidence/explain - analysis
- Make sure judgements are well-supported and analytical, and that knowledge is specific, relevant and accurate.
- Support all explanations and analyses with factual knowledge. Use at least 3 dates, names, key terms.
- Make sure you understand the different types of essay questions – causation, how well handled, change and continuity etc – this will be explained in class many times.
- Don't run out of time – make sure you know the timings of both exams



## Maths

Exam board & link to specification:

Find past papers easily here:

Other useful online resources:

- [DrFrostMaths.com](https://www.dr-frost-maths.com)
- [Maths Genie - Free Online GCSE and A Level Maths Revision](https://www.mathsgenie.co.uk)
- [Bicen Maths - YouTube](https://www.bicenmaths.com)
- [Physics and Maths Tutor](https://www.physicsandmathstutor.com)
- [UpLearn](https://www.uplearn.com)

To further improve in Maths you could:

In lessons

- Make sure you are ready to begin lessons promptly by having the correct resources for each teacher
- Bring all appropriate equipment including a calculator for each lesson
- Aim to complete as many maths questions as possible during lessons.
- Set out your work as shown in the worked examples, with full working-out.
- Always read the question carefully and check your answers make sense to ensure you are scoring the most marks you can on each question.
- Correct your work in green pen so you can learn from your mistakes.
- Hand in homework set so that you can act on the personalised feedback given on each task.
- Complete a minimum of 5 hours of independent study each week.
- Ensure that you catch up with any work missed through absence
- Ask for help if you are struggling!

When revising

- Allocate time to practicing exam style questions on different topics in the same session
- Complete at least one past paper per week, highlighting questions you need additional help on and ask for help if required. Do not neglect applied, this is a third of your course.
- Go over the yellow unit assessment review sheets in your exercise book to remind yourself of which topics you personally found challenging, then complete a mixture of exam questions on these topics which can be found on Active Learn, Dr Frost or Maths Genie.

- Learn thoroughly all the techniques you have been taught. Practise these by using past papers.
- Engage in further practice by attend weekly Maths clinic sessions.
- Set out your work logically, including all of the intermediate steps, especially on a calculator paper, and ensure that it supports any conclusions made.
- Take your time when reading questions. Underlining key words and refer back to these when you have completed your working.

## Music

Exam board & link to specification: Eduqas

Find past papers easily here: please can we not share this as there are only 6 papers available and I need them for end of topic assessment/mocks

Other useful online resources:

- [teoria: Music Theory Web](#)
- [Ms Langham's Youtube](#)
- [www.Alevelmusic.com](http://www.Alevelmusic.com)

To further improve in Music, you could:

- Create a daily practice routine for your main instrument and focus on building technical skill
- As you approach your recital, make sure that as well as practising tricky sections, you are also practising each piece fluently from start to finish, and then all pieces in the order of your recital. Record yourself and listen back to your performance. Consider where the inaccuracies are and how clear your expression is.
- Attend music ensembles in or outside of school. Senior choir is compulsory for A Level musicians to develop dictation/harmonic analysis skills.
- Sign up for solo performance opportunities in school
- Attend the music studio in lunchtimes/after-school to work on your composition, as well as consistently making progress in your 3 non-taught hours per fortnight
- Listen to as many examples as possible from the genre you are composing in, to build ideas of style. Create analysis documents of similar pieces and breakdown the harmonic patterns, variety of texture and approach to development. Use this analysis to inspire your own piece.
- Use teoria.com to improve dictation skills- you should practice several times a day, or ideally every day for 10 minutes. Start with rhythmic dictation and then move onto melodic (rhythm and pitch). Increase the difficulty by adding more complex keys and chromaticism.
- Watch YouTube videos of orchestral recordings to improve instrumental recognition and regularly listen to performances of the set works
- Regularly dip into the Spotify playlists for Rock and Pop
- Following your lessons reviewing Haydn analysis (y12) and Debussy and Poulenc (y13) sheets, make sure all notes are copied and colour coded onto your annotated scores
- Regularly use your blank scores to test yourself on structures, themes and harmonic analysis, then check your answers against your annotated score

- Make a bank of flashcards for the structures, thematic sections and all keys of all movements of the set works, so these are known from memory.
- Make a bank of flashcards for each genre of pop music studied with dates, artists and key musical features
- Make a bank of flashcards for vocal techniques, rhythmic devices and melodic devices used across all pop genres
- Keep your essay plans neatly organised and stored so that you can create flashcards to remember key points
- Regularly refer to your resources outlining the structure of exam questions to make sure that you are familiar with the techniques required (e.g., Q2h table and Q12e bullet points with bar numbers)
- Keep your listening folder organised chronologically

## PE

Exam board & link to specification: [AQA](#)

Find past papers easily here: [AQA | A-level | Physical Education | Assessment resources](#)

Other useful online resources:

- [2022 AQA A-Level PE Revision \(theeverlearner.com\)](#)
- [2023 AQA A-Level PE Revision Hub \(theeverlearner.com\)](#)

To further improve in PE you could:

- Continue to compete and practice in your practical activity outside school.
- Be aware of the assessment criteria for your activity from the specification and practice and improve in those areas.
- Obtain video evidence at the highest possible level, showing both the core and advanced skills.
- Ensure that you are attentive in all lessons
- Make neat and succinct notes.
- Organise your folder so that it is accessible and easy to follow.
- Ask when you are unsure of any areas that you don't fully understand.
- Spend an extra 2 hours per week in learning and reinforcing topics covered.
- Regularly attempt exam questions and use the available mark schemes on the AQA website.
- Respond to feedback given by your teachers both in lessons and after topic tests.
- Know the different question types for A01, A02 and A03 and how to respond appropriately.

## Physics

Exam board & link to specification:

A Level Physics - [AQA](#)

Find past papers easily here: [A-Level Physics Papers - PMT \(physicsandmathstutor.com\)](#)

Other useful resources:

- [Kerboodle](#)
- [Isaac Physics](#)
- [A Level Physics Online](#)
- [Up Learn \(subscription required\)](#)
- [Physics and Maths tutor](#)

To further improve in Physics you could:

In Class

- Review and consolidate class notes: regularly go through your class notes, highlight key concepts, and create summary sheets or flashcards to reinforce your understanding.
- Seek additional support from teachers: if you encounter difficulties in specific areas, don't hesitate to seek help from your teachers once you have tried things on this list.

When revising:

- To prepare for your exams, organise your time so that your revision is not left to the last minute. Create a revision timetable and break the Physics specification into weekly chunks.
- Make the most out of the resources that are available; remember you can use Isaac Physics, Kerboodle, A Level Physics online, the CGP revision guides, physicsandmathstutor.com and Up Learn to revise topics in preparation for the exams. Use these to add to your class notes.
- Learn key definitions for all the Physics topics - flashcards can help with this.
- Make sure you know and can rearrange all the equations and you know exactly what each symbol in the equation represents.
- Make sure you can recall standard units and interpret prefixes correctly.
- When examining investigations always identify the independent, dependent and control variables as well as possible sources of errors. Be careful to include a detailed scientific analysis that links theory with the results obtained.
- Following your assessments always act on SKREAM analysis and complete your SMART targets.

- Complete past papers that match the AQA specification, then compare your answers to the mark scheme carefully.
- After completing revision, identify any problems that you found, then ask in lessons for help or for clarification.
- Use your green pen effectively when adding to and improving classwork, homework, and tests (so that it becomes a revision tool for future tests) to help you to fix, familiarise and feed forward before the next test (also more resources on the Physics 'Student SharePoint').

### Exam tips

- Read exam questions carefully and learn to annotate key information within questions by underlining key information or circling it before you start to answer the question.
- Allow yourself thinking time to process the question before answering.
- Annotate diagrams to help you fully understand the question before you begin to write your answer.
- For calculation questions, write out equations and show all working/rearranging before calculating correctly and give the appropriate units in the final answer.
- Take care when stating your final calculated values to the correct number of significant figures.
- Read through your final answers carefully as a final check to gain any extra marks.

## Politics

Exam Board & link to specification: [Edexcel Politics Specification](#)

Find Past Papers easily here: [Edexcel Politics Past Papers](#)

Other useful resources:

- [Tutor2u](#)
- [BBC News](#)

To further improve in Politics

- Check news websites regularly
- Follow news sites and periodicals on social media e.g. BBC, Guardian, The Times, Byline Times. There is also a class Facebook group to share articles. Most have apps where you can access some or all content for free.
- Listen to podcasts. All broadsheet newspapers have a political podcast – the Guardian has a UK Politics Podcast and a separate one for US Politics. The BBC has Political Thinking, The New Statesman and The Spectator both have podcasts and there's always The Rest is Politics, The Rest is Politics Leading and The News Agents.
- Keep your folder organised and up to date
- Practice past paper questions, particularly in the lead up to Exams.
- Redraft assessments if necessary



## Psychology

Exam board & link to specification: [AQA | AS and A-level | Psychology | Specification at a glance](#)

Find past papers easily here: [AQA | AS and A-level | Psychology | Assessment resources](#)

Other useful resources:

- Electronic textbook - to access your digital resource please click on the following link or paste into your browser: <https://illuminate.digital/aqapsych2edy1/>  
*For Student Digital Book access, please provide your students with the following username and password*  
*Student Username: SURMSTON7*  
*Student Password: GREEN7*
- Video link about using electronic text: [AQA Psychology for A Level Year 1 & AS Digital Book Bundle 2nd Edition - YouTube](#)
- [Psych Boost - YouTube](#) -great short videos explaining the content
- [tutor2u psychology approaches - YouTube](#) -lots of useful revision videos
- <https://www.tutor2u.net/psychology>- great for webinars on answering exam questions & interactive quizzes.
- <https://quizlet.com> -make revision cards for key concepts and studies.
- N.B. There are lots of websites for different psychology specifications, *please avoid using them unless they explicitly state that they are suitable for AQA*

To further improve in Psychology, you could:

- Practice answering exam questions under timed conditions
- Attend Psychology support sessions such as prep which focuses on revision and Aim Higher which examines how to answer extended questions.

## Religious Studies

Exam board & link to specification: [AS and A Level - Religious Studies - H173, H573 - OCR](#)

*For RS, the key focus is on*

- *Philosophy of Religion*
- *Religious Ethics*
- *Development in Christian Thought*

Find past papers easily here: [AS and A Level - Religious Studies - H173, H573 - OCR](#)

Other useful online resources:

- [I Think Therefore I Teach – Tips for A level students. Lesson ramblings for teachers \(helpful ideas too!\)](#)
- [Homepage | peped \(teachable.com\)](#)

To further improve in RE you could:

- Prepare yourself for lessons by
  - making sure you have all the relevant notes, resources and equipment
  - reading ahead in your textbook/ re-reading your notes from the previous lesson
  - Ensure you have completed all the independent study tasks / suggested reading including the RS review magazine.
- Learn specialist vocabulary. Make yourself a glossary of technical Ethical and Philosophical terms and write out the definitions. Practice using these words in your answers to questions.
- Take an active role in lessons. Ask questions if you are not sure what your teacher expects you to do. Try to answer at least one question per lesson – do not worry if you are wrong – sometimes giving the wrong answer will enable you to learn much more effectively.
- Refer to the specification when you are revising.
- Learn the key points in each section -using your notes and revision guide
- Use your textbook and work booklet well. Always read about the work that has been covered in class and answer the questions in the textbook.
- Practice past papers. They are available on the OCR web-site. But doing the questions is not enough! You should use the published mark schemes to check your answers and then re-write them to improve them where necessary. You can also look at the examiners reports on the OCR website – this will tell you the common mistakes made by the candidates. Whenever you find a question you cannot do ASK YOUR TEACHER for help.
- Use the weekly lunch time support sessions.
- Use independent study periods wisely and productively, it doesn't all need to be writing – you could watch YouTube tutorials on A-Level Religious Studies.

## Sociology

Exam board & link to specification: [AQA | Sociology | AS and A-level | Sociology](#)

Find past papers easily here: [AQA | AS and A-level | Sociology | Assessment resources](#)

Other useful resources:

- [Sociology | Sociology | tutor2u](#)
- [The Teacher Sociology You Tube](#)
- [A level Sociology – The Sociology Guy](#)
- [Home \(britsoc.co.uk\)](#)

To further improve in Sociology you could:

- Make sure your file is organised – it is much easier to revise if you have an organised set of notes.
- Ensure that you catch up with any work missed through absence
- Create a glossary of all the key terms you have learnt for each unit.
- Review and consolidate class notes: Regularly go through your class notes, highlight key concepts, and create summary sheets or flashcards to reinforce your understanding.
- Complete past questions: Practice exam questions to familiarise yourself with the question format and improve your exam technique. You have been provided with question banks for each unit and they are also available on AQA. For 20 and 30 markers you could just plan your answer out or write them. There are templates for essay planning available in P2. Use the indicative content in the mark schemes to ensure you are interpreting the question correctly.
- Practice PERC paragraphs – ensure you have a relevant study and evaluation comment for they key points you would discuss for each topic.
- Watch tutor2u revision videos and walk throughs of exam questions. These are really useful. They also have a range of blog articles for you to extend your thinking further.
- Rewrite any assessments where you were not happy with your grade. Use your class notes and textbook to help you.
- Complete end of unit questions in your textbook.
- Keep up to date with the news and keep a list of events that happen that are relevant to the topic areas we cover.
- Attend all revision sessions that are offered.