



Tutor
Science

A Guide to Exam Preparation



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About Tutor Science

We sincerely believe that one should be aware of the source of advice prior to taking advice, especially about things that really matter, such as education. So, pay attention.

We're Tutor Science, an organization that believes in making Maths and Science fun to study. Our team consists of expert tutors who have been teaching young students for several years. Our aim is to help students enjoy achieving the grades that they truly deserve. We focus on providing tailored academic help for students in ways that are best suited to their studying style.

Our one-to-one sessions are personalised to the individual needs of the student and give them the focused attention that is lacking in their classroom environments. We use our sessions not only to improve a student's understanding of the subject but also keenly develop their confidence, a highly demanded skill for all exam aspirants. The sessions are at the comfort of your home, in a space that you feel safe to ask away all the doubts you have.

If you would like to hear more about what we can do for you or your child's academic progress, give us a call today on 07586 729342.

Or you could also simply email us at info@tutor-science.co.uk.

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We're proudly based in Uxbridge, London. Contact us to find availability of a tutor in your area.

How to Study?

Disclaimer: The following study advice can be applied to pretty much any subject, but we recommend that you adapt them to the subject as required.

At the start of the year

Believe us when we say this.....if there is a best time to start your prep for your exam, it is when the school year begins. It might feel too early but longer the time you give yourself to familiarise with the subject, the more well prepared and relaxed you will feel when exam season approaches.

The best part is that you won't be in a rush to get through all the concepts. You would have all the time in the world to get through them. Say you start this way with good intentions, but in order to not end up slacking by the end of the 1st month, you need a solid plan.

A solid plan is detailed and efficient. It's a reasonable schedule that you can rely on throughout the year that accommodates all the topics and also has enough time set aside for you to relax. This plan should be tailored to your capabilities and other commitments. We highly recommend that you take your time to design this plan as efficiently as

you can. The more efficient it is, the easier it will be to follow it throughout the year.

3 months before the exam

At this stage, you clearly know how well you are prepared for the exam. At this stage, your school would have also given you plenty of information about what you could expect in the exam. We recommend that you gather all this information together to either adjust your existing plan or create a new study plan to get through all the needed topics.

With the limited time left, your plan will have to work around that. Once again, efficiency is key here. Specifically, efficiency in allocating a set amount of time to revise a topic depending on how hard or easy you find it. It would be extremely useful to be honest with yourself when assessing your existing knowledge about a certain topic. If you have no idea about what a certain topic means, admit it and dedicate time to familiarise yourself with it.

As the exam approaches closer, we recommend that you prepare a name list of all the major topics in a subject or even make a photocopy of the contents list of your textbook. Mark each topic on the scale of confidence i.e., how confident you feel about a topic. Imagine how you would react if a question related to it appeared in the exam, would you answer it with ease or struggle. So yes, rate it accordingly

and you will have a clear understanding of which topics you need to focus on days closer to the exam.

1 week before the exam

So yes, just 1 week left. If you have not begun your revision up until now and you are not very familiar with the subject, make sure you carry your lucky charm to the exam. Carry two if you can. Or three. Because you would need quite a lot of luck to swing through the exam and get a good grade.

For those who have begun revision, pat yourself on the back. You've come this far, and you did not slack. Go ahead and eat a self-congratulatory chocolate because you will need energy to get through this surreal period. Let's get you equipped with some real advice now.

Whip out the topics list you made and during the start of the week, get on with the topics you feel least confident in. We understand and so should you that it's not advisable to try and master all such topics in the last minute. So, don't do that. Instead gain enough familiarity with topic to be able to at least attempt it in the exam.

During the last couple of days, give a brief glance at the topics you already feel confident in. This is more common than you thought but we would like to inform you that there might be two or three topics that you thought you knew really well but you don't recall much about them. Keep calm and do not freak out. If you have an hour or

two to spare, read the chapter or practice questions related to the chapter and try to recall as much information as you can. Anything that you can't recall can be omitted in the name of human error. Our brains can hold only so much and that's alright. Just focus on being as confident and relaxed as possible when exam is just hours away.

1 day before the exam

Once the exam season starts, you would hardly get any breathing space. So, utilize these precious 24 hours before an exam wisely. Dedicate $\frac{3}{4}$ of the day the once again glance over any topic that you require but do not insist on learning anything new. You have worked hard in the past few weeks to learn so many new things and your brain is trying to retain the information. Feeding new information to it now is counterintuitive. So, just let you and your brain to focus all energy on retaining existing information.

The remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ of the day will truly be yours to chill. Yes, you read it right. Chill. Eat a meal that you truly enjoy (yes, pizza is fine.) and spend some quality time with yourself or your favourite people. Head for the zzzz as early as you can because sleep is absolutely mandatory to retain as much information as possible for tomorrow's exam. Don't forget to set an alarm though.

If you feel that you might benefit from an early morning quick glance session, schedule one. If not, wake up and walk to the exam hall with as much confidence as you can muster.

Revision Techniques

Expand after class

This one's simple and yet hardly anyone seems to do it! If you wait until you get home or until exams come around, you'll have forgotten the meaning behind a lot of your notes. Instead, summarize your notes as soon as you can.

Keep a notebook that you use at school for all subject. Write everything there and once you will get home have a notebook for each subject, clean write and expand your notes from the school notebook. Explain in great detail what you have learned, very soon you will forget the information that seems easy today.

Create a study area

We are controlled by the environment we surround ourselves with. We tend to study better if it is the same place and conditions that we normally study in or that we have found to be effective for ourselves. Use desk lamp and **ONLY** use it when you are studying. When you take a break, get up from your desk and turn the lamp off. This trains you to study while seated there. It becomes automatic!

Turn your phone on silent and put it out of eyesight. This will GREATLY reduce the chance that you get distracted by it.

Study actively

The more active you are, the more effective you are. Studying is NOT reading it over and over. For the majority of us, this is not an effective study method. Decide if what you are learning is a concept or a fact. Example: understanding the name of a bone is a fact, understanding what it does in the body is a concept.

If you memorize without understanding the function of it, the comprehension of the concepts, it is a lot of wasted learning. Can you put the concept in your own words?

If you can't, you don't really understand it. Making it meaningful is the biggest struggle most students face while studying.

Recognition vs Recollection

The human brains visual recognition threshold is amazing!

Example: when you see a person once and then not again until years later, yet you are still able to remember them. Most people will go through their notes or the textbook and highlight the most important stuff.

When you go back to study and say, 'oh I remember this,' you don't end up studying those items which means you don't actually end up studying the most important stuff.

Get at least 8 hours of sleep

REM (Rapid Eye Movement Sleep) occurs for most adults about every hour and a half once asleep. If you don't sleep for 8 hours, you aren't getting enough REM. This means that what you've studied doesn't become permanent.

Studies have shown that getting enough sleep improves the brain's ability to store information. By not sleeping adequately, you undo good studying.

Efficient studying

Efficiency while studying is greatest for the first half hour. If you don't take breaks after that you're wasting time. Things that are reinforced we do more of, things that are punished or ignored we do less of. Take breaks every half hour, about five minutes long. Do something fun! Tell yourself this is your treat/reward for studying for 30 minutes effectively.

If you do this, your efficiency will stay at nearly 100% for the entire length of time you study.

SQRRR

SQRRR stands for *Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review*. It is a reading comprehension method from the book *Effective Study* (1946) created specifically for college students.

Survey: Skim through each chapter, look at the pictures and ask yourself questions about the content of the reading for a couple of minutes. This causes you to look for answers. Skimming through should take 3-5 minutes. Generating questions such as “What is this chapter about?” or “What question is this chapter trying to tell me?” should only take 3-5 minutes to complete. If you intend to find something, you tend to find it.

Read: Use the Survey and Questions to begin reading actively. In other words, read in order to understand the questions you came up with.

Recite: You should try to retrieve from memory what you read and recite it out loud in your own words. Try recalling major points.

Review: At the end of the passage, say back to yourself what the point of it was (in your own words).

Summarize or teach what you learn

Studies have shown that students learn more if they know they will have to teach the information to someone else. Trying to teach what

you learn to someone else is an easy way to figure out what you don't know.

Why? Teaching others helps us to organize information in our brains. If you don't have anyone you can teach, try summarizing the points in your own words.

Use mnemonics

Mnemonics are learning techniques that help you remember things. They are better than straight memorization for remembering facts. Facts are often harder than concepts to tie meaning to.

Some examples of mnemonics include acronyms such as ROYGBIV – Used to remember red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. They also include coined sayings and image associations i.e., associate what you're trying to remember with images. For instance, if you're trying to remember that there are 9 calories per gram of fat, associate it with “fat cat” because cats have 9 lives. Even music and rhymes make great learning tools. Make a jingle for any list of items. These work best for long lists.

The weirder you make them, the more likely you will be able to recall them!

Active recall–practise testing

Have a look at each chapter and write on a piece of paper as much as you remember about this chapter. Open your book and see what you missed out and create a note at the beginning of the chapter. Come back to it and do the same thing, and test if you have improved. When you try recalling information you stretch your brain and the knowledge will increase as will memory do.

Prepare your own flashcards to do this. You can use an application called ANKI. You can note a flash card being hard to remember and Anki will ask you more often about it. Make notes with your books closed, explain it in your own words. Test how much you know about it and if this was easy or hard for you.

Write questions for yourself about each topic and then try to answer them yourself with the book closed. Have a list of questions that you can answer every day and test if you have improved or not.

Space repetition

Create a timetable on when you need to revise for each topic. The harder your brain has to work to retrieve information the stronger that information get encoded in your brain.

Don't mix things, don't try to read the whole book in a day. That will be impossible, and you are wasting your time.

Space your revision and that will improve your knowledge of the subject and your memory. Practise a bit everyday instead of trying to do as much as you can at the weekend.

Create a spreadsheet on Google sheets. It is preferred as you can use them wherever you are.

Create a spreadsheet for every subject, write all topics in a column. Write down the date you revised for each topic and use a colour to remind you if it was easy or hard (e.g. easy=green, hard=red). This will give you a clear picture of how much you are revising and how much are you struggling and which topic requires more time.

Always revise what you struggle first and more often. It's more pleasant to study things that you know but it's more productive to improve your weaknesses.

On hard topics, don't spend all day in one topic. Try to cover other topics and come back to it the next day or next week.

Final word

Being a student is a unique stage in everyone's life. It can seem quite stressful with several responsibilities nesting on your delicate shoulders.

However, the challenges you face as a student help you prepare for the life outside school. We would like to see you utilise these precious years in the best way possible and cherish those guaranteed summer breaks, because they're not a thing in the world outside school.

Taking exams seriously does not mean freaking out every time one approaches. It means to prepare diligently and giving your best shot. Like they say, suffering is optional. Since life is a pyramid of choices, we sincerely hope you would make sensible choices in these foundational years of your life as a student and make way for the best future possible.

Need the extra help? Get in Touch.

Whether you are looking to improve your grades or advance your knowledge, we are here to help. If you are or your child is seeking that 1 to 1 attention and academic help missing in regular school classes, feel free to contact us for it. We have helped several students to ace their GCSEs and A-levels and would be glad to give you or your child the help they need.

Contact us for qualified help from expert teachers, at the comfort of your home.

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