Ullswater Community College

SUCCESS SERIES

AMBITIOUS & KNOWLEDGEABLE LEARNERS

WHAT DOES EFFECTIVE REVISION LOOK LIKE?

PARENT GUIDE

Introduction

Welcome to this booklet on effective revision!

As a parent, you play a crucial role in supporting your child's academic journey. This guide will provide you with practical strategies to help your child become an effective and confident learner.

Why is revision important?

Revision is more than just cramming the night before an exam. It's a systematic process that helps your child consolidate learning, identify knowledge gaps, and improve their overall understanding.

What are effective revision techniques?

This booklet will explore a variety of proven revision strategies that can help your child achieve their academic goals. These strategies include:

- Flashcards: A classic tool for memorisation and quick recall.
- Spaced Repetition: A technique that involves reviewing information at increasing intervals over time.
- Spacing: Taking short breaks between study sessions to allow your brain time to process information.
- Interleaving: Mixing up different types of problems or topics during study sessions.
- Deliberate Practice: Focusing on specific areas of weakness and practicing them systematically.
- Dual Coding: Combining verbal and visual information to enhance memory and understanding.

By understanding and implementing these strategies, you can help your child develop effective study habits and achieve their academic potential. By starting early, we can work together to ensure that your child is fully prepared for examinations next summer.

Attend. Achieve. Succeed.

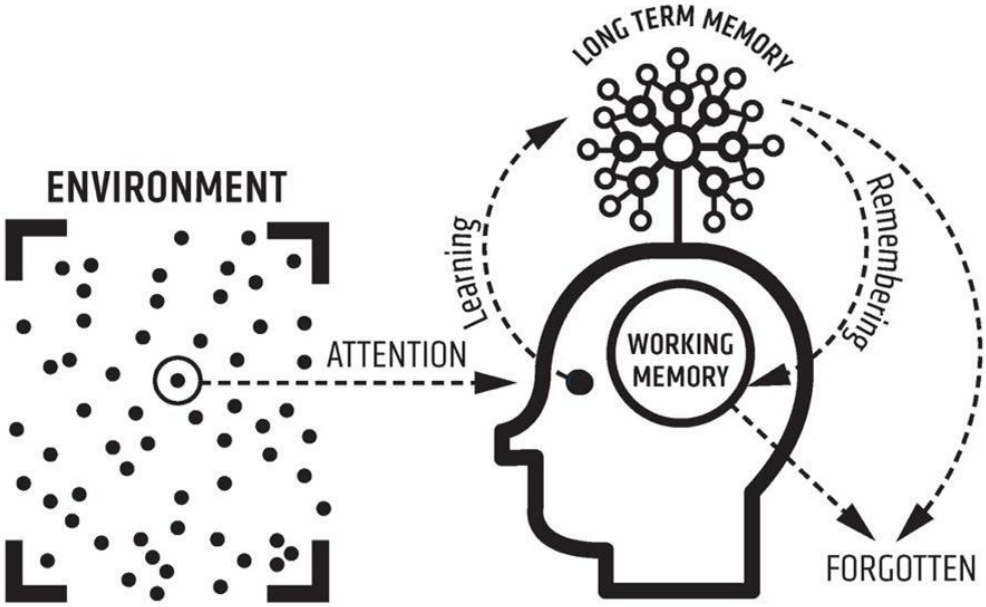
Teachers work hard to continually assess pupils to know how to best support them. If additional help is needed, teachers will provide **intervention sessions**. These are compulsory for students to attend and are vital in ensuring that they are as successful as they can be in the examinations later this year.

We will always let you know what interventions are taking place. Please talk to your child about these and ensure that they are attending.

Memory – the science of learning

In recent years, there has been lots of research around the science of learning and how we learn and retain information.

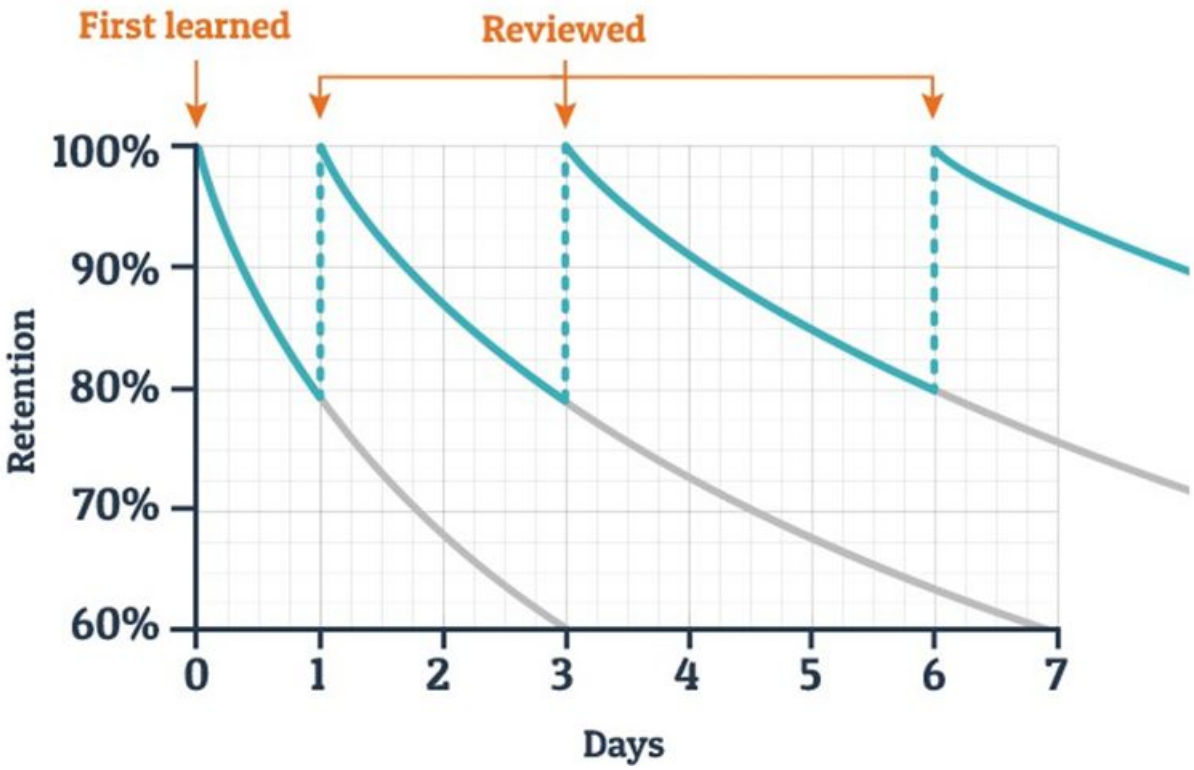
In summary, if we think of the learning process using the following diagram, it will help us have a greater awareness of the most effective revision strategies based upon the available research.



1. We have a certain amount of attention to pay and this can be limited and can dramatically vary depending on the individual or the environment. In the diagram above, **'attention'** means we acknowledge new information and this is then transferred into our working memory.
2. Our **working memory** is finite and we can only absorb a limited amount of information at a given time. This may be up to 30 seconds. As an example, if you write down a 'long number' and try and remember it every 30 seconds, you will be surprised how difficult this is to do!
3. Information is processed into our **long-term memory** through **'learning'**. This long-term memory is effectively unlimited, and we can retrieve information from here back into our working memory as needed in a given moment. As an example, this might be your phone number or address. We don't walk around thinking about those two things every second of the day but it is in our long-term memory ready to be used and retrieved when needed.
4. Information in our **long-term memory** is interconnected and linked with prior knowledge. Anything that is not connected or not successfully stored well enough in our long-term memory is forgotten and this is completely natural.
5. If students undertake enough retrieval practice, generating the information in our long-term memory, it increases a level of fluency within the subject. Practice makes perfect!

As stated on the previous page, forgetting is completely natural. The following diagram outlines this process and is called the Ebbinghaus Forgetting Curve (1885).

Typical Forgetting Curve for Newly Learned Information



Ebbinghaus proposed that humans start losing 'memory of knowledge' over time unless the knowledge is consciously reviewed time and time again. He conducted a series of tests on himself which included the memorisation of a meaningless set of words. He tested himself consistently across a period of time to see if he could retain the information. He found that:

- **Memory retention is 100% at the time of learning any particular piece of information (in the moment). However, this drops to 60% after three days.**
- A range of factors affect the rate of forgetting including; motivation, the meaningful nature of the information, the strategies for revision and also psychological factors (sleep for example).
- **If each day, repetition of learning occurs and students take time to repeat information then the effects of forgetting are decreased.** According to research, information should be repeated within the first 24 hours of learning to reduce the rate of memory loss.

In summary, what do we know about **memory**?

- Consistent practice and revisiting previous material strengthens memory and boosts learning.
- Information, if not revisited, is 'lost' from our memory.
- Our working memory is finite and limited and so overloading this or cramming for revision doesn't work.

TOP TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE REVISION

Let's explore a number of different strategies to ensure your revision is as effective as it can be.

Retrieval Practice

Simply put, recalling information from memory is simple and powerful. Retrieval practice is a learning strategy which makes you think hard and brings information to mind. It is the action of actively retrieving knowledge that boosts learning and strengthens memory.

It means trying to remember previously learned information as opposed to simply re-reading it.

Examples include:

- Knowledge quizzing and low stakes testing.
- Multiple choice tests.
- Completing past paper questions or practice answers.
- Answering verbal questions asked by teacher/peers/parents.
- Creating flashcards or revision materials where you can 'test' yourself.

Over the next few pages, we will explore the following powerful and effective revision strategies:

- Flashcards
- Spaced Repetition
- Spacing
- Interleaving
- Deliberate Practice
- Dual Coding

FLASHCARDS

One particularly effective strategy is the creation and use of **flashcards**. Flashcards are generally a card containing a small amount of information as an aid to learning. The use of flashcards are for low stakes testing to improve recall and to strengthen memory.

An effective flashcard may include the following (*in each subject they will be used in a different way*):

- A key term/key word with definition on the back.
- A key date with the event on the back.
- A key equation with its use in practice on the back.
- A past paper question and a model answer on the back.

How to use Flashcards

Identify Knowledge



- What are you creating flashcards on?
- Do you have your revision guide / knowledge organiser?
- Use your book to look at previous misconceptions from your feedback.

Colour Coding



- Use different coloured flashcards for different topics.
- This helps with organisation, NOT RECALL

Designing



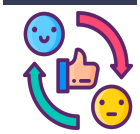
- One question per flashcard.
- Make them concise and clear.
- Use one word prompts to encourage you to recall as much information as possible.
- No extended answer questions.

Using



- Write your answer down, or say out loud. Then check if you are correct. This will clearly show gaps in your knowledge - areas to focus on.
- Don't just copy or re-read.
- Used spaced retrieval to revisit knowledge gaps more regularly.

Feedback



- How well have you performed when you go back and check your answers?
- Is there anything you need to revisit in more detail?
- Is your knowledge secure? If so, try applying it to extended exam-style questions.

TOP TIP

Avoid answering questions in your head.

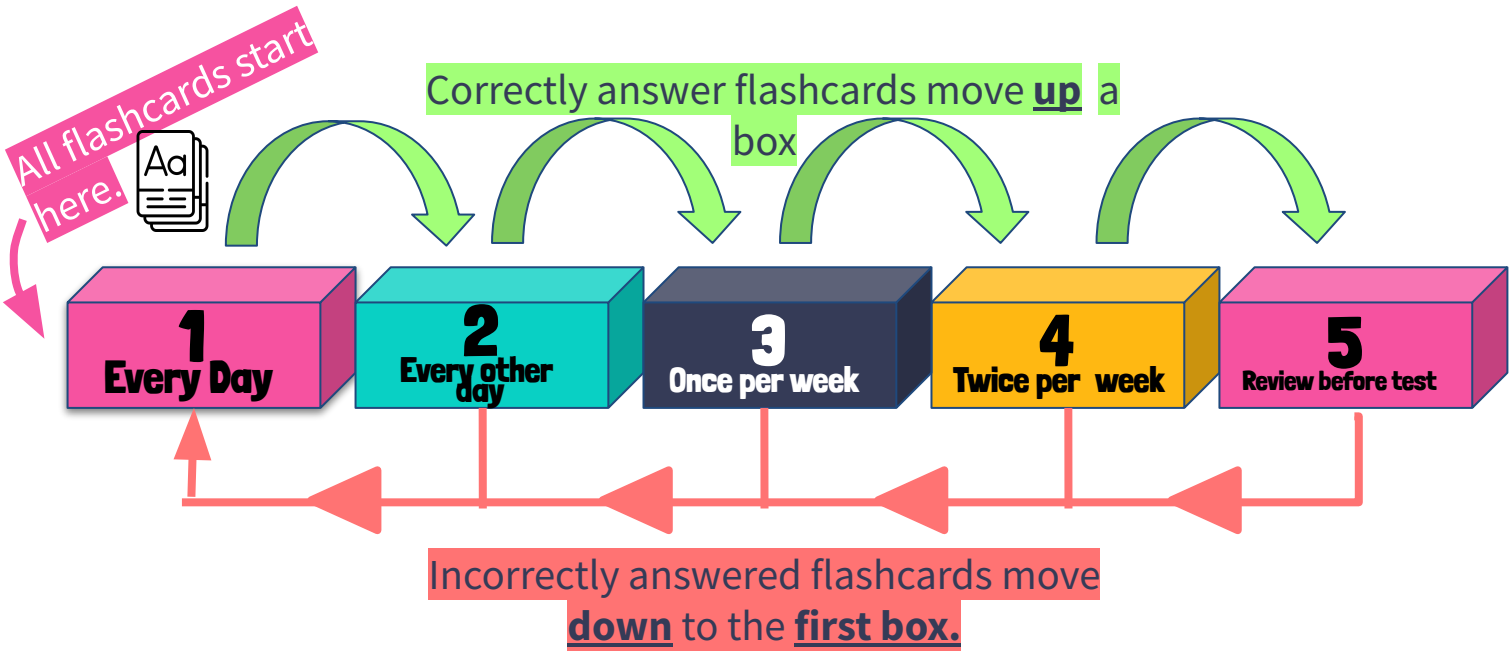
Research shows that when you answer a question in your head, you are not properly checking your knowledge. Say things out loud or write it down to check your knowledge properly.

SPACED REPETITION

Spaced repetition is a learning technique that involves reviewing information at increasing intervals over time. When combined with flashcards, it becomes a highly effective method for memorising information and retention.

Create flashcards: Write the term or concept on one side and the definition, explanation, or image on the other.
Review regularly: Review your flashcards at increasing intervals. If you can recall the information easily, the interval between reviews increases. If you struggle, the interval decreases.
Active recall: Instead of passively reading the information, actively try to recall it before flipping the card. This strengthens neural connections and improves retention.

Spaced Repetition: How to use flashcards



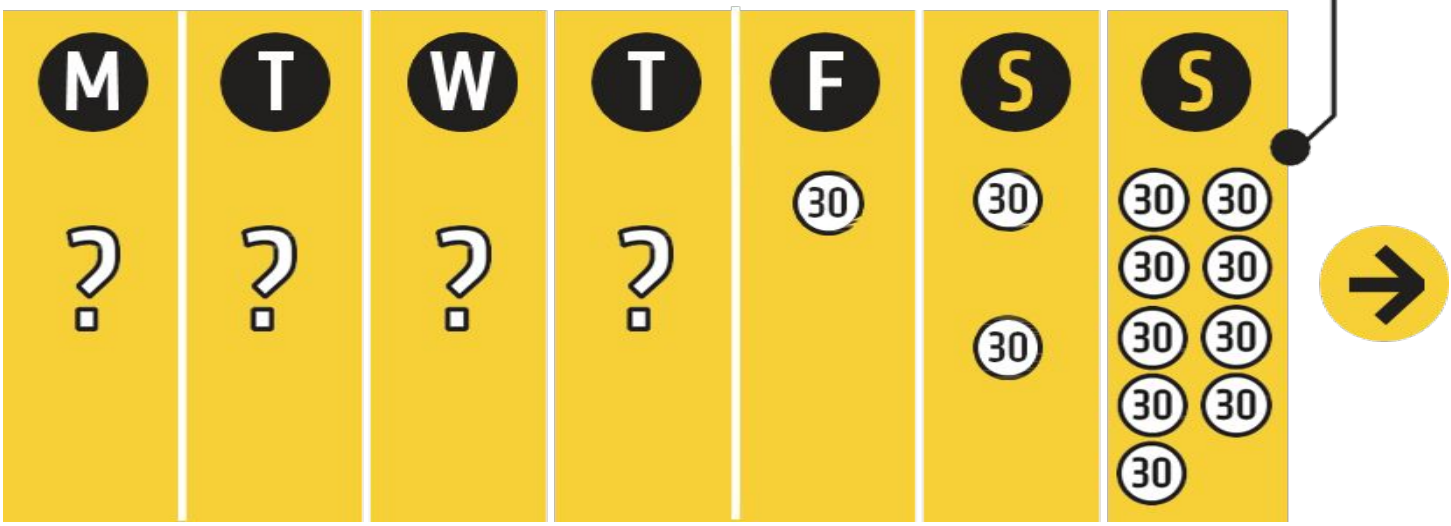
How does this help?

- Strengthens long term memory.
- Practices retrieving knowledge into your working memory.
- Gives you immediate feedback about what you know and don't know.
- Can be applied to a range of different revision strategies.
- Can be used over a long period of time to get the best results possible!

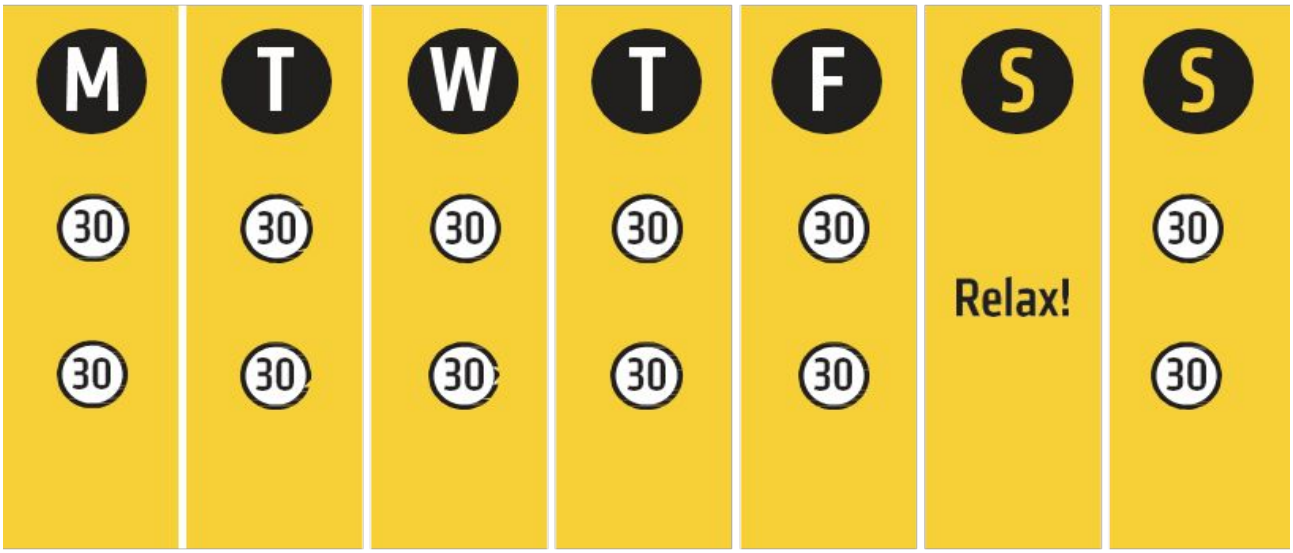
SPACING

Spacing out your revision into smaller chunks over a period of time helps you to remember the material better and ensures you are less stressed with your revision.

Let's say you have a test one week and you have 5 hours to prepare for it broken down into 30 minute chunks. Very often that process looks like this.



Instead of mass practice, a much more effective way of revising is to space out your revision this:



By breaking up your revision into 30 minute chunks and spacing out the time between revision, you will consolidate what you have learned and retain the material much more effectively.

INTERLEAVING

Interleaving involves switching between ideas and topics during a study session. This ensures that you are not studying one idea or topic for too long. Mixing up your revision and chunking it supports learning and strengthens your memory.

As we have seen with spaced practice, leaving gaps between studying is very effective but what if you are studying multiple topics within a subject? Interleaving means mixing it up and not studying all the material at once.

For example, instead of organising your revision week like this:

M	T	W	T	F
MACBETH	AN INSPECTOR CALLS	CREATIVE WRITING	UNSEEN POETRY	CHRISTMAS CAROL
MACBETH	AN INSPECTOR CALLS	CREATIVE WRITING	UNSEEN POETRY	CHRISTMAS CAROL
MACBETH	AN INSPECTOR CALLS	CREATIVE WRITING	UNSEEN POETRY	CHRISTMAS CAROL

A much more effective way of organising your revision would be like this:

M	T	W	T	F
MACBETH	UNSEEN POETRY	AN INSPECTOR CALLS		CREATIVE WRITING
AN INSPECTOR CALLS		CREATIVE WRITING	MACBETH	UNSEEN POETRY
CREATIVE WRITING	MACBETH	UNSEEN POETRY	AN INSPECTOR CALLS	

As you are doing this, another highly effective strategy is to try to think of connections between topics you are studying considering similarities and differences.

Studying one topic for a long time can give them impression you have mastered it but often this can be misleading.

DELIBERATE PRACTICE

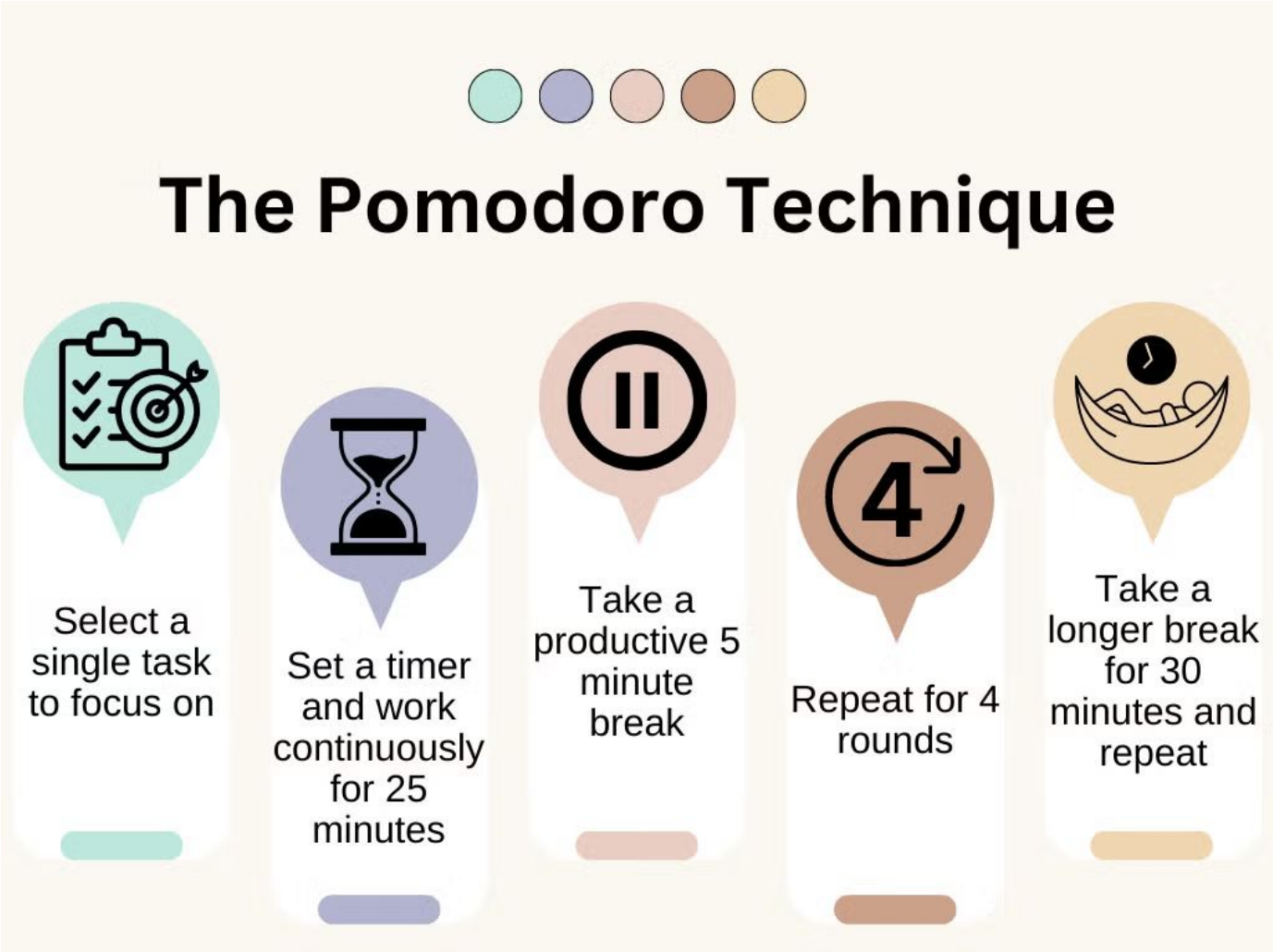
This follows a simple process to support your revision. Start by spending time reviewing a topic/unit before quizzing/testing yourself **with no notes and from your memory (this is vital for revision)**.

Once you have finished, check your answers. **This will support you in showing where your 'knowledge gaps' are and where focus needs to be in your future revision**.

Revision shouldn't keep you in your comfort zone, you need to be thinking hard and identifying your own areas for development.

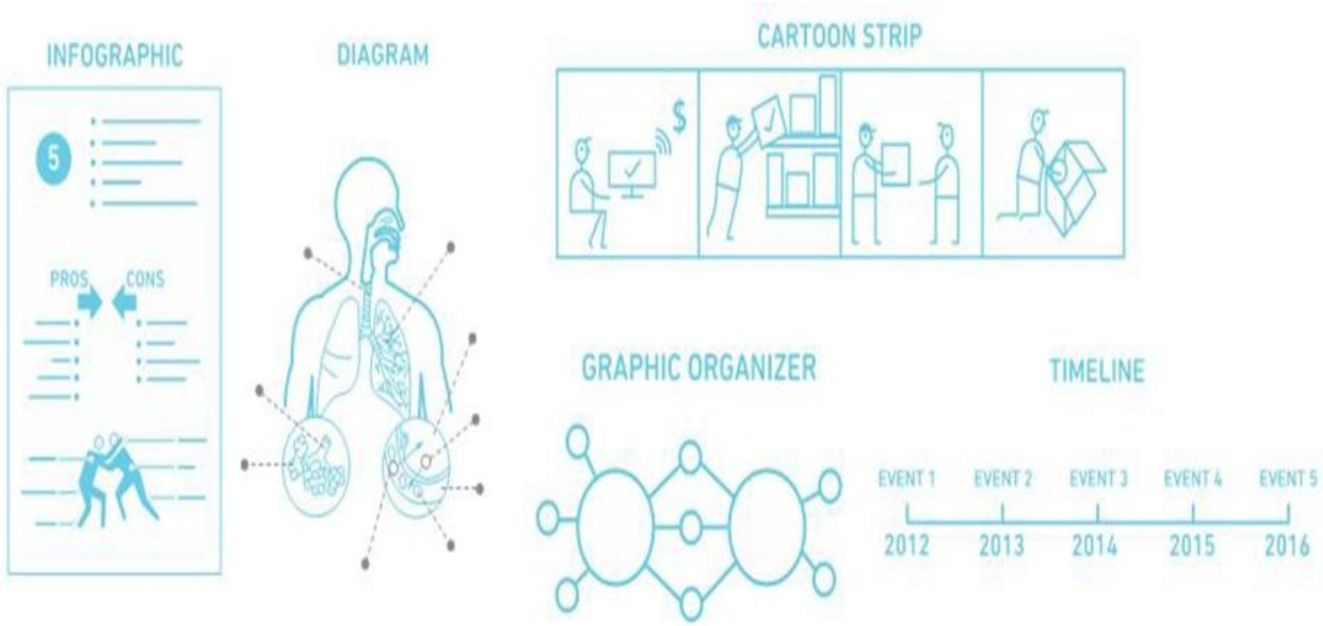
Avoid simply revising topics you enjoy.

A technique to support deliberate practice is the **Pomodoro Technique**.



DUAL CODING

Dual coding is a learning technique that involves representing information in both verbal and visual forms. By combining words with images, diagrams, or other visual aids, you create multiple pathways for your brain to access and retrieve information



Key principles of dual coding:

- **Enhanced memory:** The brain processes visual information more quickly and efficiently, leading to improved memory retention.
- **Better understanding:** Visual representations can help you understand complex concepts more easily by providing a concrete context.
- **Increased engagement:** Visual aids can make learning more interesting and engaging, increasing your motivation.

Effective dual coding strategies:

- **Mind mapping:** Create visual diagrams that connect ideas and concepts.
- **Diagrams and charts:** Use diagrams, charts, or graphs to represent data or relationships.
- **Imagery:** Create vivid mental images to associate with information.
- **Mnemonic devices:** Use memory aids like acronyms, rhymes, or songs to link information together.

INEFFECTIVE REVISION

With all the previous information in mind, it is important to think about strategies that students may employ that have a limited or no real benefit on learning or memory. These include:



Simply writing out notes or copying from a textbook/exercise book.



Reading and doing nothing with the information. Trying to focus on 'too much information' on a single page and cramming revision.



Highlighting information for the sake of it.



Not enough silent work or attention to a given task. Attempting to revise while multitasking and doing other things.



Comfort zone revision of easy material that pupils have already mastered because it makes you 'feel good'.

Habits and Routines

Within your revision, it is vitally important to establish a strong routine. Having goals are good for setting a direction. What do you want to achieve in this revision session?

In order to support the forming of good revision habits, there are a number of areas to consider:

- **Start small and build up –** reduce distractions where and when you revise and get your family to encourage the creation of a revision timetable and placing it somewhere visual in your house. Ensure someone else is knowledgeable of this timetable to enable accountability and aid support.
- **Make it attractive** – collaborative focused revision is beneficial (alongside attending interventions or revision sessions) but you could also ensure there is a 'reward' at the end of a revision session. If I complete this, I can do this.
- **Make it satisfying** – challenge yourself, track your own revision progress and ensure you stick to your revision timetable. Small steps build success and motivation. Use PLCs or checklists to support.
- **Make it obvious** – revise in one area, leave your materials out ready to support organisation and ensure routines are stuck to. Ensure your environment is clear, uncluttered and comfortable.



REVISION TIMETABLE TEMPLATE

Week beginning:

Day	9:00 – 9.30	9:45 – 10.15	10:30 – 11:00	11:15 – 11:45	1:00 – 1:30	1:45 – 2:15	2:30 – 3:00	3:15 – 3.45	5:45 – 6.15	6:30 – 7:00	7:15 – 7.45	8:00 – 8.30pm
Monday												
Tuesday												
Wednesday												
Thursday												
Friday												
Saturday												
Sunday												

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