

Ysgol Uwchradd Dinbych

Denbigh High School



Revision Guidance

Cyd-weithio - cydlwyddo – â balchder

Succeeding Together - Progressing with Pride

Making the Most of Your Revision

These are the **biggest** exams of your life so far, so don't blow it! Don't panic and don't pretend they'll go away because they won't.

If you're organised, you'll find the exams won't be the nightmare experience that you fear and if you go about things in the right way you'll even have time for a social life.

It's important to recognise that we all have different learning styles! Our brains take in information at different rates and store it in different ways.

This booklet is designed to give you examples of different ways of learning and revising so that you can find a technique which suits you best.

Three Tough Truths

1. *YOU'VE got to do it.*

Not your teachers with their revision sessions. Revising is like giving up smoking. You can get the patches, but at the end of the day it's YOU that has got to do it, and it involves decision, and will-power.



2. *Revision takes time.*

There is no 'instant' version which will cut corners. Sleeping with your book under the pillow doesn't do it. Stop playing at other things, and start working at your revision. And the worse you are at it, the longer you've will have to spend on it ... or fail.



3. *Fix the information*

Revising is remembering. It's not 'revising' unless you're fixing it into your brain. If you spend five hours working in your room, but you still can't remember it in the exam, you've spent 5 hours working, but you've not done any revision.

Never just read your notes. You must always be **DOING** something with them to **FIX** the information in your brain (and probably the easiest way to do this is to write it down).

Have the right attitude!

Having the right attitude to revision will make a massive difference to how successful you will be. Expect the best of yourself. Resolve to give yourself the best opportunity you can to reach those target grades by making revision your number 1 priority for the next few weeks. Write down the reason you are revising so you know what it is for

“I am revising so I can stay on in 6th form.”

“I am revising so I can achieve my college place.”

“I am revising so I can gain my apprenticeship.”

Planning is crucial !

- The top tip for successful revision is to make a plan; otherwise it is easy to waste your precious revision time. We recommend that you start your revision at least six weeks before your exams begin. It is helpful to look at your exam dates and work backwards to the first date you intend to start revising.
- Write down all the subjects you have to revise, and number them in the order you want to revise them.
- Make an exam timetable and write down beside each subject the date and time of the exam. Make time for perhaps 3 or 4 subjects that you want to revise each day, with 1 hour for each subject.
- Plan it carefully, revising the hardest subjects at the beginning of the day when your mind is fresh and spending more time on those subjects you expect to struggle with. Remember that you will need to update it from week to week!
- You may find it helpful to change from one subject to another at ‘break’ time, for example doing one or two sessions of Maths and then changing to Geography, or alternating a favourite subject with a more difficult one. It helps to build in some variety

- Draw up a revision plan for each week. Fill in any regular commitments you have first and the dates of your examinations
- Use Revision Checklists or Syllabuses for each subject as a starting point. Look at what you need to know and try to identify any gaps in your knowledge. (A good way of doing this is to look at the results of past papers or tests you have worked through)
- Plan in time off, including time for activities which can be done out in the fresh air. Take a 5 or 10 minute break every 40 minutes and do some stretching exercises, go for a short walk or make a drink
- Make a detailed revision timetable on a large piece of paper (A3 at least) and post it up somewhere that everyone can see it. That way, everyone knows what you are meant to be studying and when. Strangely enough, letting other people know your plans actually lightens the load, because then it's not just down to you to motivate yourself.
- Adjust your timetable if necessary and try to focus on your weakest topics and subjects
- Don't panic; think about what you can achieve, not what you can't. Positive thinking is important

Subject	Date of Exam
English	
Maths	
Science	
Welsh	
RS	
Opt 1	
Opt 2	
Opt 3	
Opt 4	

An example of a revision timetable might look like the one below. Notice the subjects have been split into smaller parts.

Week date	3.25pm-4.30pm	4.30pm-5.30pm	5.30pm-6.00pm	6.00pm-6.30pm	6.30pm-8.00pm	8.00pm-8.15pm	8.15pm-10.00pm
Monday	relax	Homework	Watch TV / computer time/ go for a walk	Dinner	Cell division (Science)	Break	Of Mice and Men (English)
Tuesday	relax	Homework	Watch TV / computer time/ go for a walk	Dinner	Symmetry (Maths)	Break	Modern World History (History)
Wednesday	relax	Homework	Watch TV / computer time/ go for a walk	Dinner	Glaciation (Geography)	Break	Atomic structure (Chemistry)
Thursday	relax	Homework	Watch TV / computer time/ go for a walk	Dinner	Training methods (P.E.)	Break	Transport (French)
Friday	relax	Homework	Watch TV / computer time/ go for a walk	Dinner	Marriage and Death (R.S.)	Break	Algebra (Maths)

Find a good place to work

It must be quiet and uncluttered even if it means camping out at the library or your Gran's house a few nights a week. Create a positive working environment with no distractions; collect all the equipment you will need to revise, including all your notes, revision guides, pens, highlighters and paper.

Use Revision Guides

Revision Guides can be useful but it is advisable stick to one, preferably the one your subject teacher recommends. You can use revision guides to test yourself and provide a focus for your revision but remember they are unlikely to cover everything you may need to know.

Ask for Help!

If you get stuck, talk to someone! You're not alone. Everyone has experienced exam stress and can sympathise with what you're going through. They might even suggest a way of moving forward that you hadn't seen.



REVISION TIMETABLE

Week date -	3.25pm	4.00pm	5.00pm	6.00pm	7.00pm	8.00pm	9.00pm
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							

Break

Revision Tips

Everyone dreads revision. It exists to be despised. But there comes a time (or several times) in everyone's life when you **have** to do it to get where you want to in life.

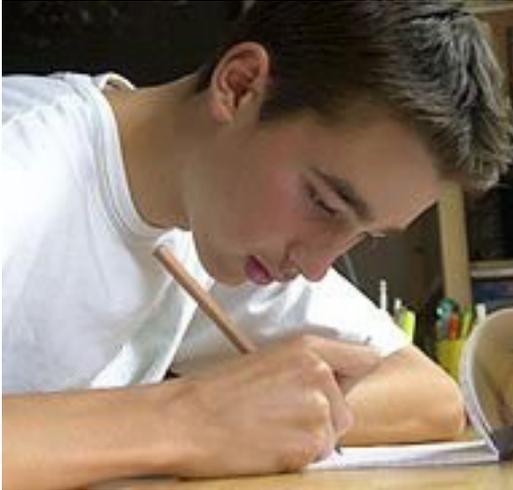
Motivating yourself to revise is one of the toughest things you have to do at school. To make it worse, there is no immediate benefit: You have to sit there for hours on end, going through endless notes for an exam that is still some time away, and to get results that you won't receive until months after you have sat the exam.

The fact is, though, that the exams **do** matter. The results **do** matter. Revision **does** matter. But at least if you really put your mind to the revision, and then don't do as well as you expected, at least you will know you have **given it your best**. Otherwise, you may **regret it for the rest of your life!**

Let the tips begin!

1. *Make summary notes*

Gather all your material for the topic area and reduce them into brief, clear notes. Then summarise those, and then again and again until you only need a few keywords to remind you of the whole topic! You can then carry around a sheet with all the keywords wherever you go. An effective way to make sure you remember certain things is to invent mnemonics.



2. *Understand how your memory works*

Some of us are better at remembering things than others. However, here is a trick that should help...

If you learn something new, in general it will already start fading in your mind after a few hours (unless it is particularly exciting). However, if you revise it again in the next four hours, it will take about 24 hours before it starts to fade. Revise it in the 24 hour period and it will last for four days, then one and a half weeks, then one month, and so on.

By setting out your revision schedule to make the most of this (learn something, revise it again after a few hours, revise it again in the next couple of days, and so on) you will be using the way your memory works to your advantage!

3. *Eat properly*

While you are using up energy revising it is important to eat properly so that your body and your mind are fit and ready for the exams. Fish, eggs and milk are high in protein which is used by your brain. But you will need energy as well. Nuts and bananas are good sources for

this (chocolate is another good source of energy, but the effects of eating a bar of chocolate last far less than eating, for instance, a banana).

4. *Take lots of breaks*



Your mind will only be able to concentrate well for short periods of time - the first 15 minutes of revision are thought to be the best. Make sure you stop for 10 minutes every 40 minutes or so. During your break, a good thing to do is to sit back for a few minutes, close your eyes, relax, and just think about the things you have just learnt.



5. *Use diagrams*

Visual stimulus is very important when trying to stay focused on your study. Colourful pictures and writing will help you stay motivated to learn and also keep the material in your head for longer.

6. Test yourself

Or, get someone else to! Ask them if they can flick through your notes and ask you some questions. If you can't answer any of their selection, note the topic down so you can re-learn it after.

7. Revise for "you"

You will probably hear your friends boasting about "how little revision they did last night" - and if you admit you have been revising you have fears of being the Swot of the class. In fact, however, your friends are probably working just as hard as you. In any case, you know how much you need to revise so just do it, and don't worry about what the people around you are doing. Everyone will get what they deserve in the end...



8. Get into the habit of planning your answers in rough

When you read the questions, underline and circle the key words to help your understanding of it. Then draw a quick (but detailed) spider diagram, listing all the important stuff to include in your answer. Finally, stop avoiding that awkward first paragraph! Focus and get on with it, writing as quickly as you can without it becoming illegible.

9. Try to sleep well

It can be very difficult to sleep in the periods leading up to the exams. The trick here is not to worry about it and get into a routine. Don't go to bed too early if you are worried about getting to sleep - it does not help. Instead relax before going to bed (One trick is to have a cup of camomile tea which is a natural way of making you relax).

10. Don't do any work the evening before your exams

If you really cannot resist, then carry around some summary notes and glance at them now and then just to keep your confidence high. But really, trust us. If you have given the max until now, then you will not learn anything you don't already know in the last evening. The extra marks you will get through having a relaxed mind, will more than offset those few extra marks you get from the tiny extra amount you can learn in one night.



11. De-digitalise

You should unplug your computer or laptop, as it's simply too tempting to go off roaming the wide, open spaces of Web-fordshire, instead of ploughing through the causes of the agricultural revolution. It is also imperative to turn off your mobile phone (one distraction too many).



Exam doctor's top tips for revision

By George Turnbull Ofqual's 'Exams Doctor' Exams have a habit of creeping up on us and there never seems to be enough time to cover everything.

Most of us wish that we had started revision sooner and that we had more time - but do not underestimate the time that is still available. So what can you do to ensure that you are in peak condition and that you perform to your best in that exam room - every time?

Get smart and grab extra time during the day by getting up earlier or shortening your lunch break. Thirty minutes each school day would give an extra two-and-a-half hours a week, which may allow you to have a night off.

Forget the exams that you have just taken. There is nothing you can do to influence them now and you are in the worst position to judge how well you performed - but there is a lot you can do to improve your performance in the ones yet to be taken. That is where your efforts should lie.

The big day

A leisurely breakfast and a walk to school is a good start on any exam morning. Do not rush but do not be late. Avoid friends, they can be off-putting and may confuse your thoughts. Do not cram new information in the night before an exam.



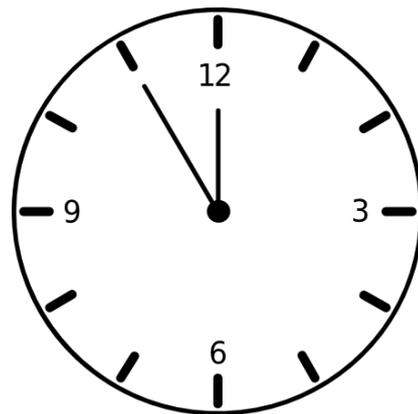
Relax, if you can, by lightly reading over your notes for the next day. Do not worry if you can't, most of us can't either, so you are no different - but stick to the no-cramming rule.

A little anxiety is generally to be expected and will help keep you on your toes.



Know the rules on phones and do not take one into the exam room. You could be disqualified. But do have a glucose sweet to help energy get to your brain. Take six deep breaths to relax and ignore those around you in those agonising moments before the exam starts.

But do read through the questions in that time, jotting down formulae and points to remember on the question paper. Time is allowed for this. Choose your questions, starting with the ones you know you can do, to build confidence.



Do not spend too long on any one question and try to do the number required. Use the number of marks for each question as a guide and make sure you do the compulsory questions, if there are any.

Be familiar with what you have to do by checking the instructions on the front of the exam paper.



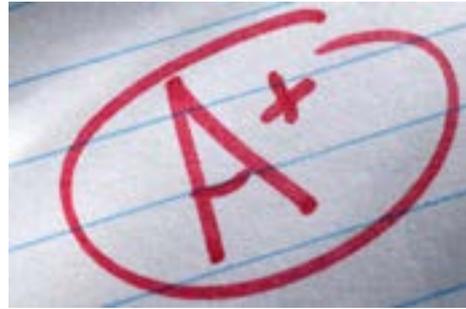
Insufficient time with only 10 minutes left for a 30 minute question at the end of the exam needs a special approach. Do the question in outline only and let the examiner know. State the main points, facts and arguments, if an essay - and by jotting down formulae and how you would use them to reach a solution, if science or maths. More marks can be gained that way with limited time available.

And do not worry now if your handwriting is not so good. It may be untidy, but if your teacher can read it, then so can the examiner. But if no one can read it, it cannot be marked. So be careful.



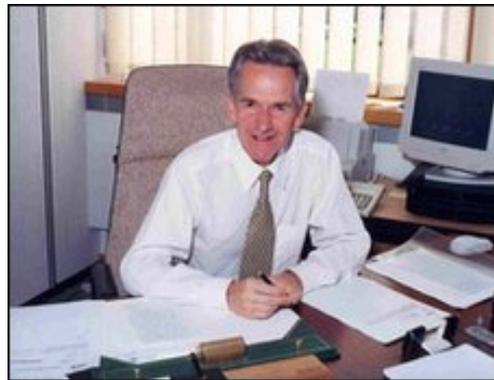
If you feel unwell during an exam, make sure that your teacher knows. You could get special consideration, if it is a valid case and you under-perform.

Do not be afraid to speak up either if the invigilator's squeaky shoes are disturbing your concentration, as they pace up and down the exam room in a regular and consistent fashion.



Good luck, whatever your state of readiness. And remember that you can always improve - where there is a need - by adopting the tips here which work for you.

George Turnbull is Ofqual's Exams Doctor and



can be contacted for a personal response at: examsdoctor@ofqual.gov.uk with any questions you have about GCSE

Revision Methods

Mini Revision Booklet

Take the topic heading for your subject and a few pieces of paper and then attempt to write concise summaries containing key information under each. This is a useful way to see what you know and create a resource that is easy to understand.

It is important that this is done completely from memory towards the end of your revision. Points you miss out can be put in an appendix section called 'points to remember'. Don't forget you're not writing a book - this should use up no more than 10 A4 sheets (both sides)

Annotations

For poems, you can blow up the poem (photocopy and stick them on large paper) and annotate it in different colours for content, and various stylistic ideas. For books and plays, chapter or scene synopses can be useful (4 points will do).

This can also be useful if you own your textbooks- you can highlight key points and ignore the waffle if you're struggling and write down helpful notes on how to remember things.



Timelines

Timelines can be helpful - especially for History. They are invaluable for making sense of a series of events, because you can trace improvements, factors etc. Pin them up in your room or on the loo wall!

Draw key theme cards, style cards etc. with evidence. You could draw a timeline for each book or play that you're studying and superimpose a tension graph where lines rise for more dramatic events.

Outrageous

It is often easier to remember things that are strange or unusual. You could try finding bizarre ways of trying to imagine the things you are trying to learn.

For example:

Think of some famous people (e.g. footballers, musicians, David Cameron, Po from the Telly tubbies) and imagine them taking it in turns to tell you a bit of information.

They could be driving tractors, or riding on a roundabout as they do so.

Fit the words you need to learn to the tune of a well known song.

Of course, you can think of some better ideas! See if you can come up with an 'outrageous' strategy of your own, then try it out. (Nobody else needs to know!)

Revision by Teaching

Teach a topic to a fellow student or a friend, thinking it through is effective revision. Fill in the gaps in your knowledge as you identify them



We remember:

10% of what we **read**

20% of what we **hear**

30% of what we **see**

50% of what we **see and hear**

70% of what we **discuss with others**

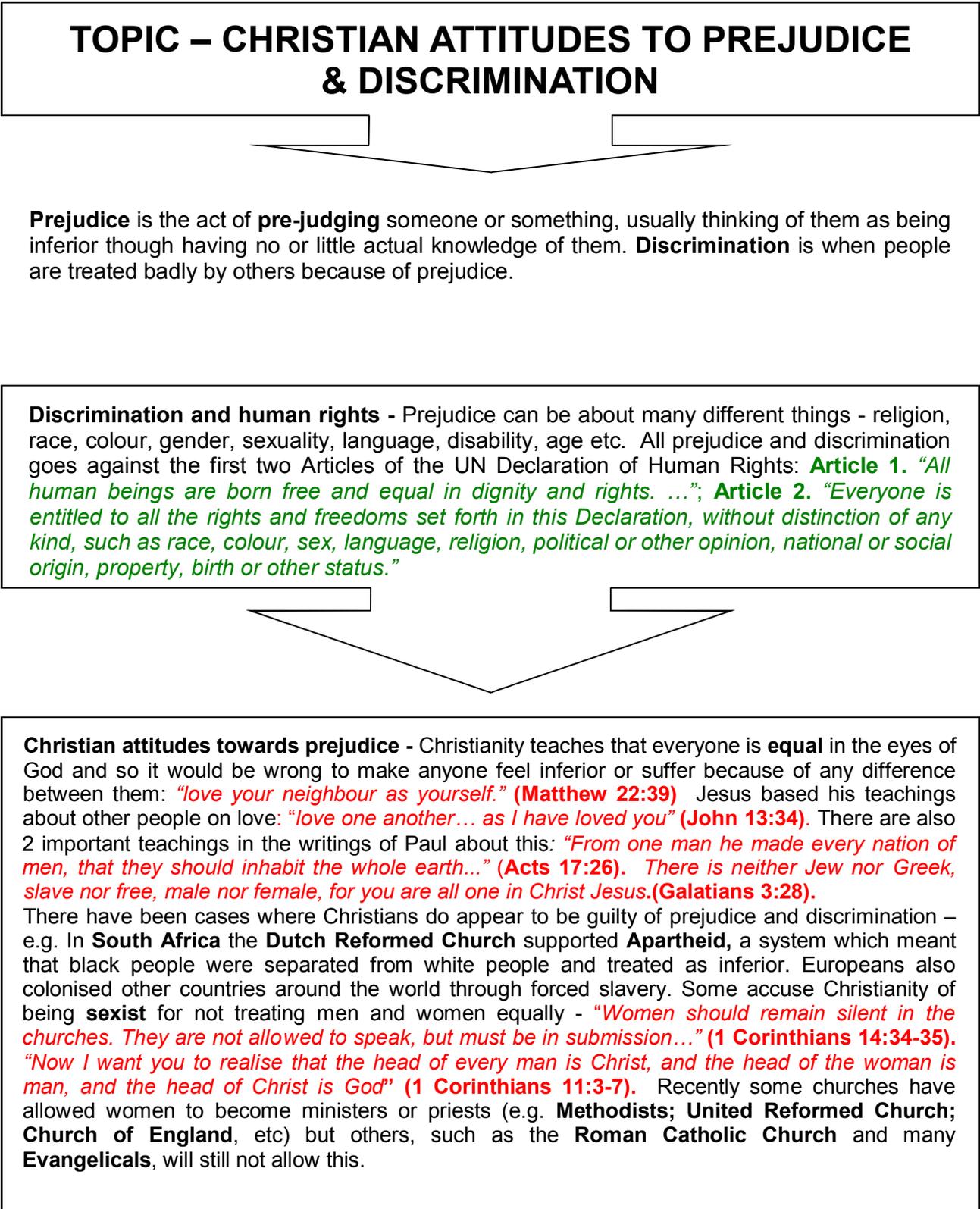
80% of what we **experience personally**

90% of what we **teach to someone else**

How to make a *Flow Chart*A Step by Step Guide.....

You can turn your subject lesson notes into a Flow Chart by writing the topic at the top and list the main ideas underneath as in this example from Religious Studies.

TOPIC – CHRISTIAN ATTITUDES TO PREJUDICE & DISCRIMINATION



Prejudice is the act of **pre-judging** someone or something, usually thinking of them as being inferior though having no or little actual knowledge of them. **Discrimination** is when people are treated badly by others because of prejudice.

Discrimination and human rights - Prejudice can be about many different things - religion, race, colour, gender, sexuality, language, disability, age etc. All prejudice and discrimination goes against the first two Articles of the UN Declaration of Human Rights: **Article 1.** *“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. ...”*; **Article 2.** *“Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”*

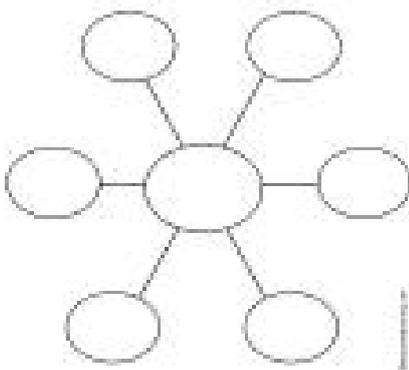
Christian attitudes towards prejudice - Christianity teaches that everyone is **equal** in the eyes of God and so it would be wrong to make anyone feel inferior or suffer because of any difference between them: *“love your neighbour as yourself.”* (**Matthew 22:39**) Jesus based his teachings about other people on love: *“love one another... as I have loved you”* (**John 13:34**). There are also 2 important teachings in the writings of Paul about this: *“From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth...”* (**Acts 17:26**). *There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*(**Galatians 3:28**).

There have been cases where Christians do appear to be guilty of prejudice and discrimination – e.g. In **South Africa** the **Dutch Reformed Church** supported **Apartheid**, a system which meant that black people were separated from white people and treated as inferior. Europeans also colonised other countries around the world through forced slavery. Some accuse Christianity of being **sexist** for not treating men and women equally - *“Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission...”* (**1 Corinthians 14:34-35**). *“Now I want you to realise that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God”* (**1 Corinthians 11:3-7**). Recently some churches have allowed women to become ministers or priests (e.g. **Methodists; United Reformed Church; Church of England**, etc) but others, such as the **Roman Catholic Church** and many **Evangelicals**, will still not allow this.

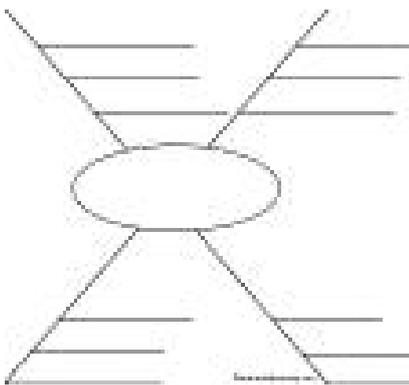
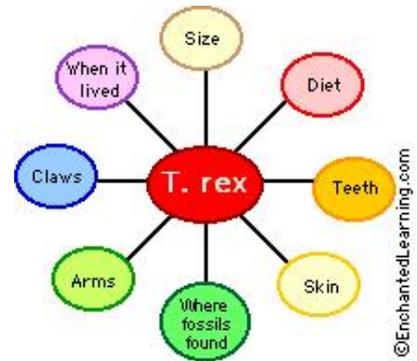
How to make a *Spider Diagram*

.....A Step by Step Guide.....

Spider diagrams are sometimes called Graphic Organisers and they come in various shapes and sizes including the traditional spider. Below are 4 thumbnail illustrations of different types of Graphic Organisers and examples of how you can use them.



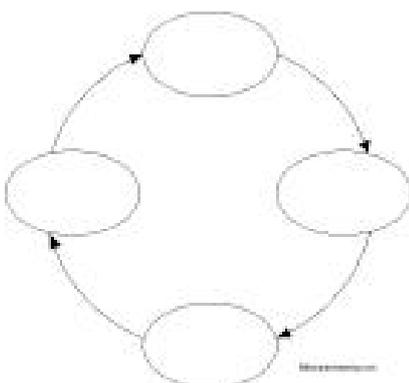
Star diagram



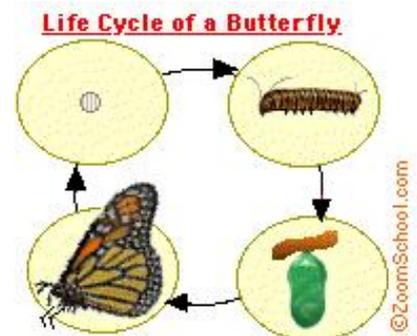
Spider diagram



Fishbone diagram



Cycle diagram



How to make a *Mind Map* ...A Step by Step Guide...

You can turn your subject lesson class notes into a Mind Map by following the instructions below.

Start from the centre of the page and work out. Make the centre a clear and strong visual image that depicts the general theme of the map.

Use a combination of key words and appropriate images. Put ideas down as they occur and wherever they fit.

Put main subject words on main lines and key words for each subject on branch lines. **DO NOT USE TOO MANY WORDS ON YOUR MIND MAP!**

Use colour to depict themes and to make things stand out. Anything that **STANDS OUT** on the page will stand out in your mind.

Use arrows, cartoons or other visual images to make the Map more memorable.



Making Notes

Notes are meant to be short memoryjoggers! There is no point in simply rewriting your class material

Keep your notes as brief as possible. One idea is to reduce all your notes into key words (a whole subject should fit onto 1 side of A4 paper).

The brain remembers things best by seeing them or storing them in different ways. For example, if you read about the causes of World War I, draw them in a diagram and then discuss them with a friend or teacher. You are more likely to remember what you revise if you are able to articulate what you have learned.

Use highlighting pens to colour code your notes.

Use Mind Maps, flowcharts, spider diagrams and other visual tools to make your notes more distinctive. (Examples of these are contained in this booklet)

Using Post-its Memory Joggers

Buy yourself some **"Post-its"** which can be used to write key-words, concepts, vocabulary, quotes, formula, etc and then stuck around the house in the rooms that you spend a lot of time in (with parents permission of course). This means that you have a ready source of revision in your line of vision, even when you are not formally revising!

Revising using Mnemonics

Mnemonics (pronounced without the M–nemonics) need not be as complicated as it sounds. This word literally means 'memory'. It's about putting something memorable into your mind to help you recall information. You create a code using rhymes, phrases or acronyms which helps you to recall information that is essential for doing well in your exams.

Mnemonics have been used for centuries in education. Anyone remember these? 'Every Good Boy Deserves Favour' – This stands for the musical notes **E, G, B, D,** and **F**.

"Never Eat Shredded Wheat" – It refers to the points of a compass **North East South West**.

'Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain' refers to the colours of the spectrum **Red Orange Yellow Green Blue Indigo Violet**.

The point is you have fun making up your own to remember keywords, formula and key facts for any subject you like. Remember that Mnemonics should be short and memorable. The funnier the better however ludicrous the Mnemonic is! Below are some further examples relevant to your subjects for revision. Once you've read these try making up your own, then write them on a Postit, stick them on a wall or mirror somewhere at home and memorise them!

KINGS PLAY CARDS ON FAT GREEN STOOLS the order of taxonomy in biology = **Kingdom, Phylum, Class, Order, Family, Genus, Species**.

OIL RIG – In Chemistry in relation to Electrons = **Oxidation Is Loss, Reduction Is Gain**.

SOH-CAH-TOA Trigonometry in Maths = **SOH ... Sine = Opposite leg divided by the Hypotenuse. CAH ... Cosine = Adjacent leg divided by the Hypotenuse. TOA ... Tangent = Opposite leg divided by the Adjacent leg**.

DIVORCED, BEHEADED, DIED, DIVORCED, BEHEADED, SURVIVED helps you to remember what happened to **the six wives of Henry VIII**

Revising with an MP3



You may learn best by listening so why not 'talk'! Do some revision by recording onto your MP3 and then listen to these while lying in bed, or travelling in a car, or walking to the shops. This also takes the 'guilt' out of being out and about instead of in front of the books.

Revising with Friends



Another great way to revise is to talk about what you do know about your subject to your friends who are also studying the same subjects as you. Take it in turns because you will learn insights on your subjects from them that you may not have even considered before and it may help clarify anything you have not fully understood! Be careful though, to be disciplined about using your time for revision and not just for idle chit chat!

