

**GETTING PREPARED FOR SUCCESS IN
YOUR EXAMS**

**PREPARE
CHALLENGE
REVISE
WELLBEING
SUCCEED
EXAM**

Dear student

This guide has been put together to support you in preparing for your exams at New College Doncaster. You have received lots of study advice and will have developed some great study habits but there is still time to improve these.

In this booklet, you will find a revision planner template which you can use to plan out your revision for both the mock exams and the final exams and to help you organise both your time and your priorities. You might want to use the digital revision planning app which you can download from your Teams or Sharepoint.

There are also some reminders of effective revision strategies you can use to ensure you are studying in an effective way and using your time wisely. Reminders of some of these will be provided through Teams messages and videos throughout the revision period too.

To get organised:

- Make sure you are clear on assessment areas for the exams
- Review the checklist of what you should confidently know for each exam and use this to prioritise revision topics
- Consider when your study sessions are going to be each week-work out where each subject and topic will fit into your schedule allowing time for exercise, relaxation and sleep! Be realistic about this. Know when you have better focus and less distractions.
- Keep a clear goal in mind-what will those good results allow you to do next year?
- Find ways to reward your hard work.

Wishing you lots of luck in these upcoming assessments and exams from all at New College Doncaster.

**PREPARE
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GETTING ORGANISED

WHY DO I WANT TO DO WELL? WHAT IS MOTIVATING ME?

WHAT ARE MY STRONG TOPICS?	WHAT ARE MY WEAKER TOPICS?
WHAT OPPORTUNITIES DO I HAVE TO SUPPORT ME DURING THIS REVISION PERIOD?	WHAT POSSIBLE BLOCKS ARE THERE TO ME DOING WELL?
ACTION PLAN BASED ON THE ABOVE POINTS:	

Dates of my assessments/exams:

[illegible]

Subject 1	
Priority revision topics based on y13 content:	Priority revision topics identified by reviewing topics covered since the start of Y12:
Subject 2	
Priority revision topics based on y13 content:	Priority revision topics identified by reviewing topics covered since the start of Y12:

Subject 3	
Priority revision topics based on y13 content:	Priority revision topics identified by reviewing topics covered since the start of Y12:
Subject 4	
Priority revision topics based on y13 content:	Priority revision topics identified by reviewing topics covered since the start of Y12:

When	Planning your revision - topic by topic, week by week. Include the WHAT and the HOW eg topic plus revision strategy	
	Topics I will revise from Y12	Topics I will revise from Y13
WEEK 1- 30.11.26 Are you in a healthy mindset for the exam preparation period? What do you need to get organised? Do you have checklists of key knowledge and/or the specification to refer to? FOCUS STRATEGY: POMODORO METHOD		
WEEK 2 Have you plotted your revision plan for the full revision period? How are you using the study cycle in this subject? Have you carried out a revision checklist audit to help you rank topics? Have you used this to interleave and space content needed in your assessments? FOCUS STRATEGY: BRAIN DUMP		
WEEK 3 Have you created flashcards for knowledge in each subject? Has your teacher advised you how to create and		

use them in each subject? Are you aware of apps you can use to create these electronically? FOCUS STRATEGY: FLASHCARDS		
WEEK 4 Are you revisiting your revision checklist audit to make sure you are spacing topics according to how secure your knowledge and understanding are? Are you using a range of apps and quizzing methods to support revision in your subject? FOCUS STRATEGY: CORNELL NOTES FOR REVISION		
WEEK 5 Have you explored visual ways to represent knowledge in your subjects eg mindmaps/concept maps? Do you use these to make connections between different pieces of knowledge? FOCUS STRATEGY: GRAPHIC ORGANISERS		

When	Planning your revision - topic by topic, week by week. Include the WHAT and the HOW eg topic plus revision strategy	
	Topics I will revise from Y12	Topics I will revise from Y13
WEEK 6 Can you summarise topics/methods in a minute in each subject? How can you check you've remembered all key information? FOCUS STRATEGY: FOLDING FRENZY		
WEEK 7 Can you teach examples of content and knowledge to other students? Can you explain how to meet the assessment criteria for the high grades? FOCUS STRATEGY: 3 LINKED REVISION STRATEGIES		
WEEK 8 Are you confidently completing exam questions in the time allowed? Are you able to mark these accurately to show		

your understanding of the mark scheme? Have you revisited previous assessments to see how you would improve now and to ensure you have addressed all feedback advice? FOCUS STRATEGY: USING EXAM QUESTIONS MOCK EXAMS WEEK 1		
WEEK 9 Are you confidently completing exam questions in the time allowed? Are you able to mark these accurately to show your understanding of the mark scheme? Have you revisited previous assessments to see how you would improve now and to ensure you have addressed all feedback advice? FOCUS STRATEGY: USING EXAM QUESTIONS		
	HALF TERM	
WEEK 10 MOCK EXAMS WEEK 2		

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When	Planning your revision - topic by topic, week by week. Include the WHAT and the HOW eg topic plus revision strategy	
	Topics I will revise from Y12	Topics I will revise from Y13
WEEK 11- REFLECT AND RESET FOR THE FINAL EXAMS Are you in a healthy mindset for the exam preparation period? What do you need to get organised? Do you have checklists of key knowledge and/or the specification to refer to? FOCUS STRATEGY: POMODORO TECHNIQUE		
WEEK 12 Have you plotted your revision plan for the full revision period? How are you using the study cycle in this subject? Have you carried out a revision checklist audit to help you rank topics? Have you used this to interleave and space content needed in your assessments? FOCUS STRATEGY: BRAIN DUMP		
WEEK 13 Have you created flashcards for knowledge in each subject?		

Has your teacher advised you how to create and use them in each subject? Are you aware of apps you can use to create these electronically? FOCUS STRATEGY: FLASHCARDS		
WEEK 14 Are you revisiting your revision checklist audit to make sure you are spacing topics according to how secure your knowledge and understanding are? Are you using a range of apps and quizzing methods to support revision in your subject? FOCUS STRATEGY: CORNELL NOTES FOR REVISION		
EASTER BREAK		
WEEK 15 Have you explored visual ways to represent knowledge in your subjects eg mindmaps/concept maps? Do you use these to make connections between different pieces of knowledge? FOCUS STRATEGY: GRAPHIC ORGANISERS		

When	Planning your revision - topic by topic, week by week. Include the WHAT and the HOW eg topic plus revision strategy	
	Topics I will revise from Y12	Topics I will revise from Y13
WEEK 16 Can you summarise topics/methods in a minute in each subject? How can you check you've remembered all key information? FOCUS STRATEGY: FOLDING FRENZY		
WEEK 17 Can you teach examples of content and knowledge to other students? Can you explain how to meet the assessment criteria for the high grades? FOCUS STRATEGY: 3 LINKED REVISION STRATEGIES		
WEEK 18 Are you confidently completing exam questions in the time allowed? Are you able to mark these accurately to show		

your understanding of the mark scheme? Have you revisited previous assessments to see how you would improve now and to ensure you have addressed all feedback advice? FOCUS STRATEGY: USING EXAM QUESTIONS		
WEEK 19 Are you confidently completing exam questions in the time allowed? Are you able to mark these accurately to show your understanding of the mark scheme? Have you revisited previous assessments to see how you would improve now and to ensure you have addressed all feedback advice? FOCUS STRATEGY: USING EXAM QUESTIONS		
WEEK 20 FOCUS STRATEGY: USING EXAM QUESTIONS		

Study Smarter, Not Harder

Begin by asking yourself...

How do you study?

Then...

Why do you study this way?

And finally...

Does it work (and how do you know?)

Because...

If your study methods feel easy, then they're not working.

For example...

Simply reading notes is not an effective learning method

and...

Neither is highlighting or underlining.

This is because...

They don't require much effort.

Instead...

More effortful strategies, like the ones covered in this booklet, produce greater long-term learning gains.

It's important to realise that...

Difficulty is desirable even if it's not always desired .

THE POMODORO METHOD

ABOUT

POMODORO is a productivity method created by Italian developer Francesco Cirillo.

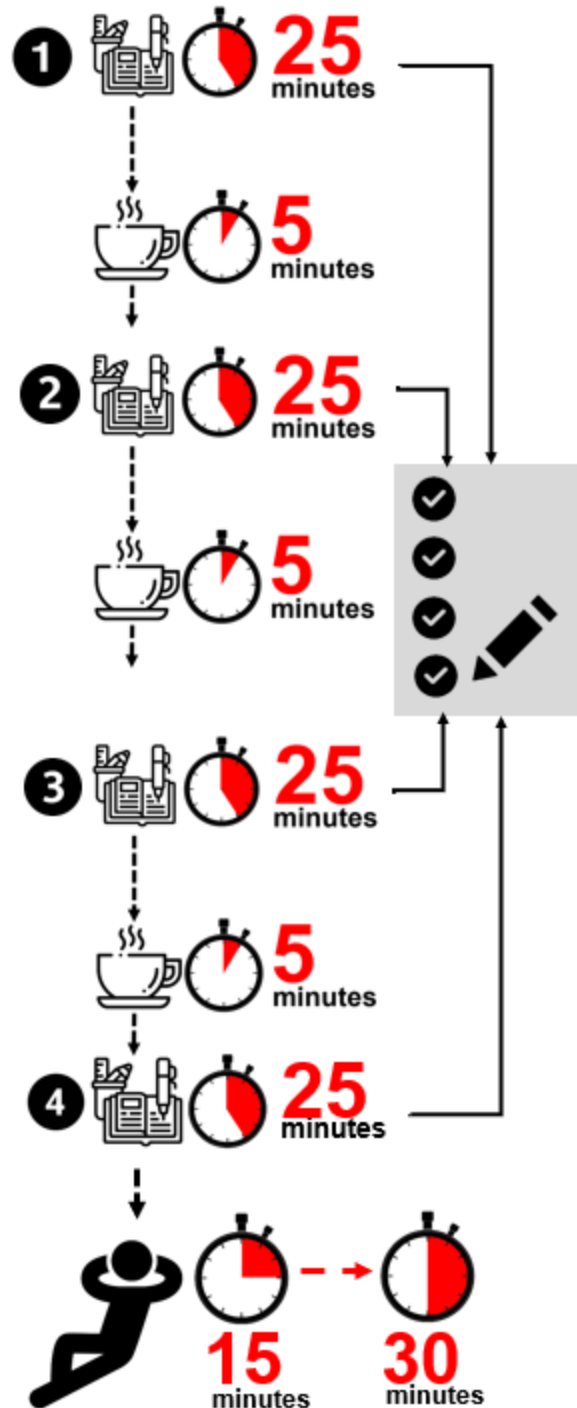
The name originates from the tomato-shaped timer that he used to track his time when he was completing assignments as a student.

"Pomodoro" is Italian for tomato

- ✓ A simple time management and productivity technique
- ✓ Involves breaking a large task down into smaller tasks (called "pomodoros")
- ✓ Trains the brain to focus for short periods
- ✓ Over time it can build your attention span and ability to concentrate

HOW

- Choose the task that you wish to complete
- Set a timer and work on that task for 25 minutes
- When 25 minutes have elapsed, place a tick on a sheet of paper
- Take a 5 minute break
- Repeat this process 3 times, taking a longer break (15 – 30 minutes) after your fourth session



Brain dumps



This is so simple and so effective. Spend, say, fifteen minutes with a blank piece of paper and write down everything you know about a topic. Once finished, look at your class notes, textbook and/or revision guide and check that what you wrote is correct. Then look at what you forgot and focus on this. Date the sheet and store it away. At a later date, do the exercise again and compare the sheets – hopefully, you remember more the second (third, fourth etc.) time and will be able to see the improvement you've made.

Brain dumps made easier

Brain dumping can be a terrifying exercise. To create a gentler, if less effective, version, compile a list of key words, terms, people, countries etc. connected with a topic and write uninterrupted for fifteen minutes using these as prompts. For example. If your brain dump was on the 'Bonding, structure and properties of matter' topic in Chemistry, your prompts could be:

$= \frac{1}{2} mv^2$ $= wd/time$ $= F \times d$ $= mcDT$ $= mgh$ biofuel **chemical** conduction
conservation of energy dissipate **distance** efficiency **elastic potential** electricity
electrostatic force **fossil fuels** friction **geothermal** gravitational potential
heating hydroelectric **insulation** Joule (J) **Kilogram (kg)** kinetic **lubricant**
magnetic **metre**
(m) Newton (N) **non-renewable** nuclear **power** renewable **Sankey diagram**
solar **specific heat capacity** store **thermal** tidal **transfer** useful energy
wasted energy water waves **Watt (W)** waves **wind** work done



Flashcards



Flashcards have the potential to be a very powerful learning aid. However, how successful this is will depend on the thought you put into making them in the first place and then how they're used. It's important to remember that they're for testing not summarising.

Making good flashcards

- One side of the flashcard should be a single question and its answer on the reverse
- Select the most important information to go on each flashcard. You could use topic checklists or bolded terms in your study guide to help you choose.
- Break complex concepts down so that they cover multiple cards.
- Use drawings to illustrate answers.

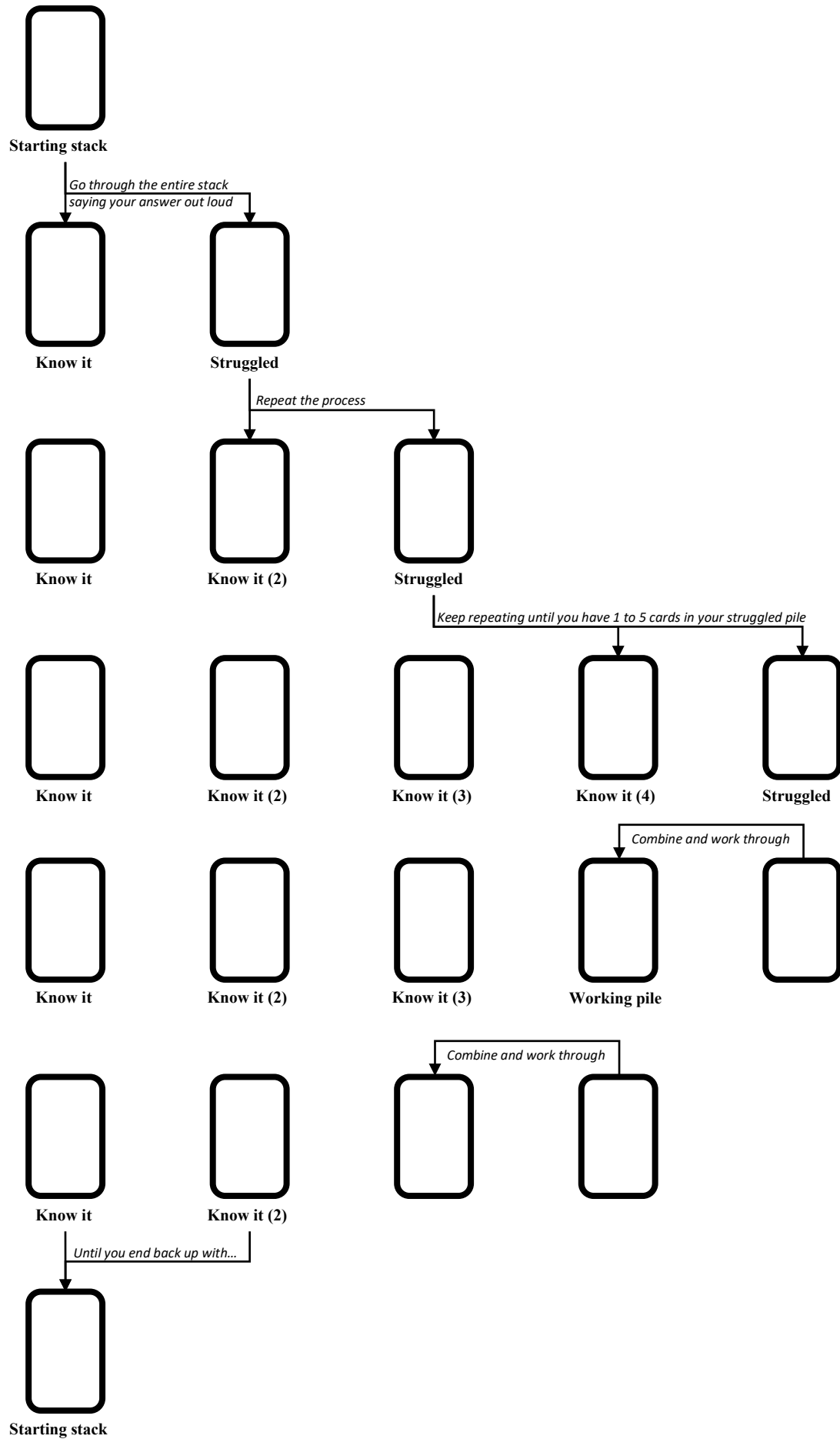
Using flashcards

- Say your answer out loud and not just in your head. It's very important you are fully committed to your answer. Even better would be to write your answer out as this is what you would have to do in an exam.
- Use them both ways – look at the answers and say what the question is.
-

Taking things further: making meaning with flashcards

- Ask yourself questions about individual cards. Once you can remember the information on the back associated with the prompt on the front, raise questions such as, 'What else is this related to?', 'Why is this important?' and 'How would I apply this information?'
- Group cards together in themes. Taking this additional step forces you to ask yourself 'Which cards have something in common with others?'. Also, this serves as a form of chunking, which helps you to remember information together instead of separately.
- Create a mind map with the cards. Explain all the connections you see between individual cards and between groups of cards. A related strategy is to use yarn or string to literally connect cards together.

Use the waterfall method illustrated below to ensure you are using spaced revision:



THE CORNELL METHOD

ABOUT

The Cornell note-taking method was devised in the 1940s by Dr Walter Pauk, at Cornell University.

- ✓ Efficient method of taking notes
- ✓ Encourages reflection
- ✓ Makes an effective study guide for revision and exam preparation

HOW

Divide an A4 page into the three sections as shown.

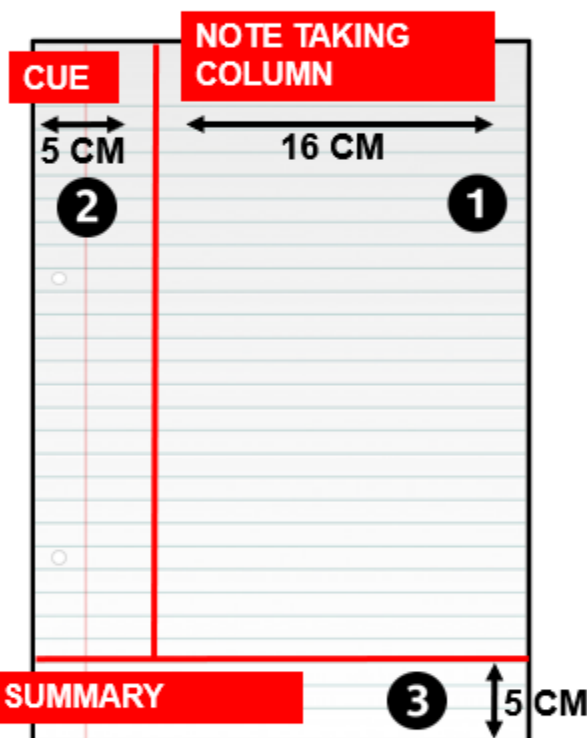
You can use different dimensions for each section if you prefer

Each section has a specific purpose:

1 RECORD

2 QUESTIONS

3 REVIEW



1 Write your notes in this section **during the lesson**

Use **any format** you like to record these notes (for example, mind-mapping)

Record only the **important information** (don't write in full sentences)

Focus on **ideas** rather than the actual words

2 This section is for recall.
Do not write in this section **during the lesson**
The cue section is created **when you review your notes**.

Do this **as soon as possible** after the lesson

Cues are in the form of **questions** that you can use the notes to answer.

3 A **summary** of the notes taken
It should be **concise** focusing on **key ideas** only
Written in **your own words**
NOTES + CUES + SUMMARY should show how all ideas fit together



MIND MAPPING

ABOUT

Mind Mapping and Brainstorming is a highly visual method of representing information

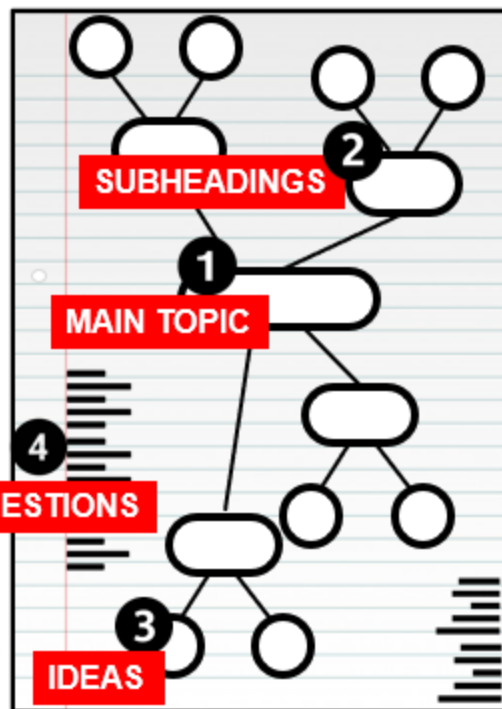
- ✓ Establishes links and relationships between ideas and concepts
- ✓ Can be used to take notes as part of the Cornell Method
- ✓ Effective when working from textbooks or written notes

HOW

This works far better on paper than as a digital method

Make sure you start in the centre of the page

- 1  TOPIC
- 2  SUBHEADINGS
- 3  IDEAS
- 4  QUESTIONS

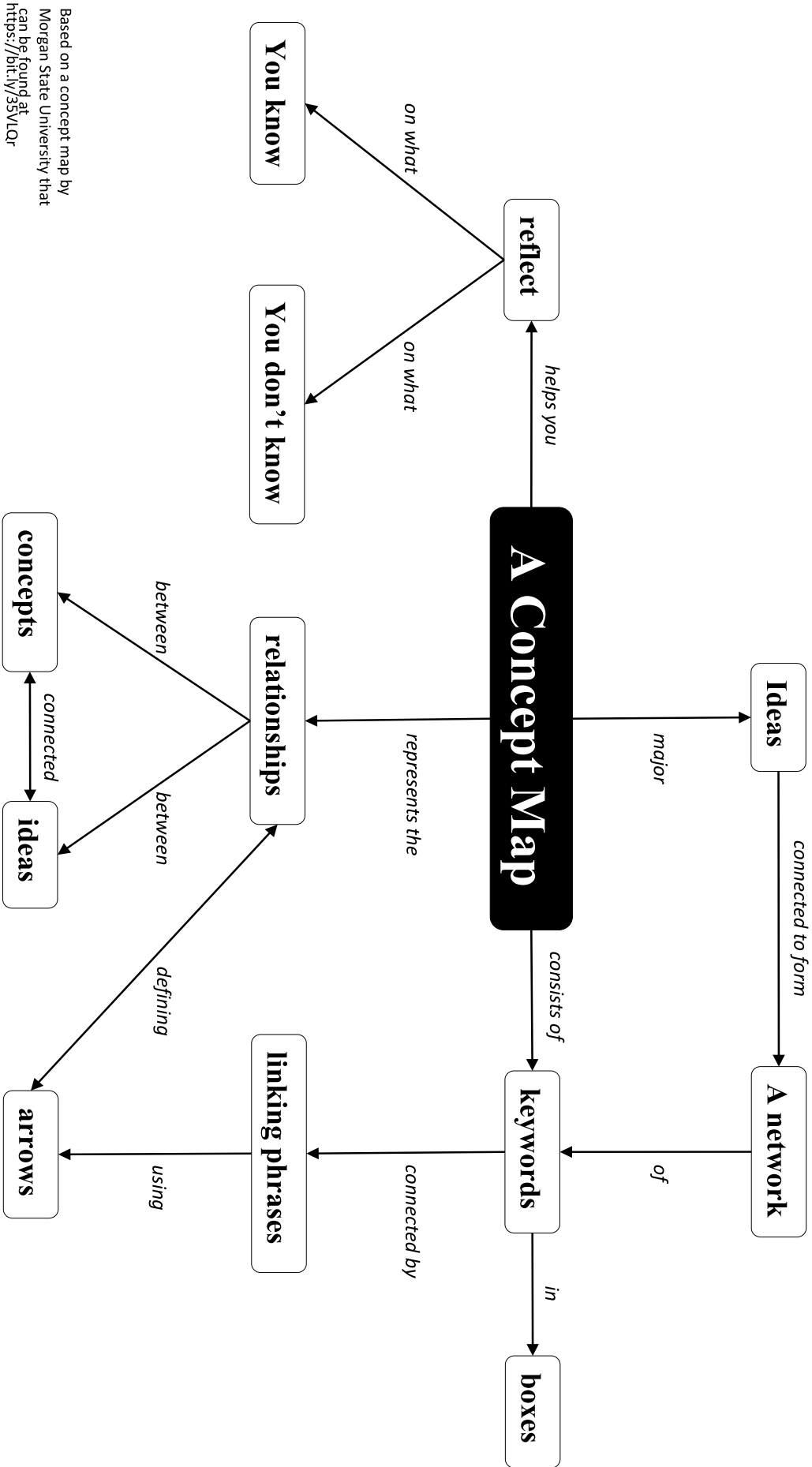


- 1 Determine the overall topic or theme
Write this in the centre of your page and circle it
If the main focus of your mind map changes – create an additional mind map – do not add the new focus to the mind map that you are already working on.

- 2 You will need to add major facts (subheadings) that relate to your main topic

- 3 Each subheading will have at least one idea related to it.
Make sure that your ideas are visually distinct from your subheadings

- 4 Use the edges of your document to write questions
These should relate to the ideas in your mind map
You could also use these areas to expand on points that need additional clarification on the main mind map



Based on a concept map by
Morgan State University that
can be found at
<https://bit.ly/35VLQr>

1

Folding Frenzy



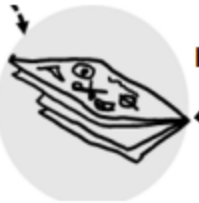
Fold
in
half



Fold
in
half



Fold
in
half



Step 1:

Write a page of notes on A4.
Focus on important ideas,
keywords, dates, events,
people.

Step 2: Create a mind map by
summarising your notes.
Include only the most
important information.

Step 3: Write a list of the 5/6
most important key
vocabulary for the topic.

Step 4: Summarise the topic
using only symbols, diagrams,
and images.



Summarising



When asked a question such as ‘what have you done today?’, you’ll likely provide a summary. This involves you selecting, organising and integrating the key moments of your day. Taking a similar approach with your studies can have a very powerful effect on your learning. What is absolutely key is that you use your own words and don’t mindlessly copy your notes or revision guide.

Self-testing



Research has shown that every time you bring a memory to mind, you strengthen it. And the more challenging you make this retrieval, the greater the benefit. Self-testing improves the recall of information, transfer of knowledge and making inferences between information. Equally, there are many indirect effects such as a greater appreciation of what you do and don’t know, which helps you plan your next steps.

Mapping



Mapping a brilliant way of organising and learning information as I hope is demonstrated on various pages in this booklet. It helps you break down complex information, memorise it, and see the connections between different ideas.

Drawing



This is about turning text into some form of drawing. Doing so involves you selecting, organising and integrating the information that matters, which forces you to think. This approach can be incorporated into the three strategies above too.

Self-explaining

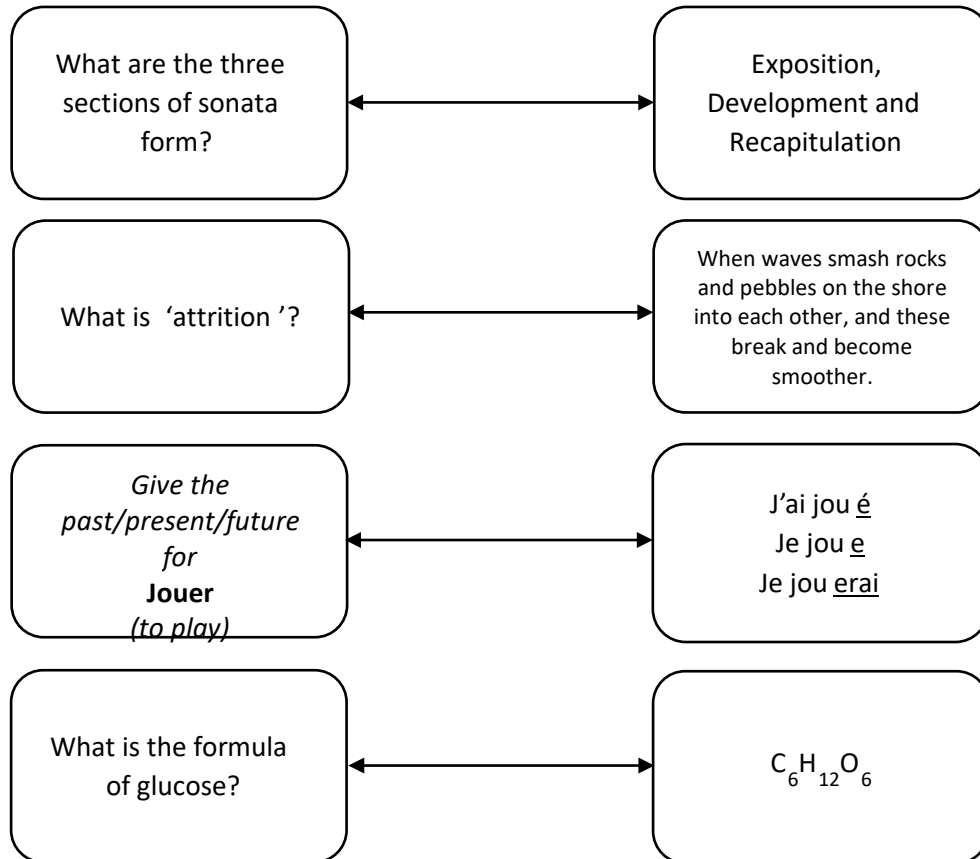


Continually ask yourself ‘How?’ and ‘Why?’ when studying a topic and then try to provide answers to these questions. Doing so helps you to see connections and differences between ideas. Self-explaining can also involve you saying loud the steps you’re taking when solving a problem. A recent analysis of 64 research studies showed that ‘it is better to ask a student to see if they can explain something to themselves, than for a teacher or book to always explain it to them’.

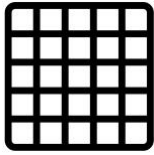
Teaching



Einstein is supposed to have said 'if you can't explain it simply, you don't know it well enough'. This strategy works best when you know in advance that you will be teaching someone. As with self-explaining, you're forced to select and organise what's important so that your teaching is as clear as possible. Having someone to interact with and ask you questions strengthens your own learning.



Thinking and Linking Grids



etc. to

populate the grid with. Ask your teacher to double-check them and share with your classmates.

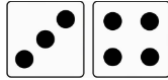
'Macbeth' Thinking and Linking Grid (created by @SPryke2)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Macduff	Guilt	Infanticide	Power	Murder	Tyranny
2	The Supernatural	Light	Prophecy	Visions and Hallucinations	Hamartia	Animal Imagery
3	Lennox	Equivocation	Witches	Macbeth	Morality	Lady Macbeth
4	Hubris	Masculinity	Kingship	Appearance vs Reality	Violence	Children
5	Sleep	Banquo	Loyalty	Hands	King Duncan	Time
6	Blood	Regicide	Lady Macduff	Ambition	The porter	Darkness

Instructions

You need a pair of dice.

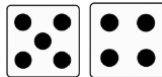
1. Roll your dice to get the co-ordinates of your first box and find the word/phrase in it. Start with the numbers along the side first. For example:



would equal 'Macbeth'.

2. Write how your word/phrase links to the play. For example, for 'Macbeth' you could talk about how he is a loyal soldier at the beginning of the play who is corrupted by ambition and falls into a cyclical nature of violence in order to preserve the power that he has pursued.

3. Roll the dice again to find a new word. For example:



would equal 'hands'

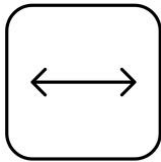
4. Write both words in the blank table below the grid. Think about how the two words/phrases link together before writing your answer in the table.

LINKS MADE

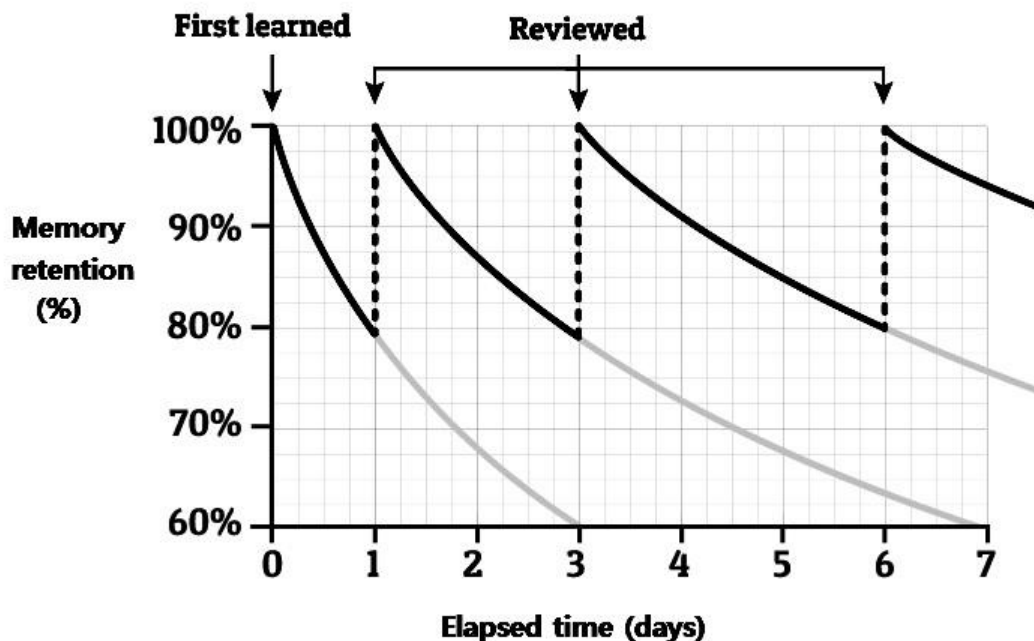
Box 1	Box 2	Link between the two

Final learning tips

Space out your learning on a subject



Spacing out your learning over time is far more effective than last minute cramming. This is based on research into how we forget and how we remember. The speed at which we forget something will depend on many factors such as the difficulty of the material, how meaningful it was to us, how we learned it and how frequently we relearn or remember it. What the last factor tells us is that when we learn something for the first time, we need to review it quickly afterwards. The more times we force ourselves to remember something, the longer the gap can be between reviews, which the diagram below illustrates nicely.



Don't study one topic at a time – mix it up!



It's better to jumble up your learning within a subject instead of focussing solely on one topic at a time and block studying that. So, rather than studying AAA BBB CCC (each letter represents a topic within a subject), there is a significant benefit in approaching it as, say, ABC BCA CAB because you're more likely to see connections between topics, which will result in a better grade.

A final self-testing and self-explaining tip – ‘Just a Minute’



Based on the Radio 4 show, you must talk for a minute on the given concept or topic without pause, hesitation or repetition. You'll discover very quickly how well you know the topic while also consolidating the knowledge and understanding you retrieve from your memory.

**MAKE A NOTE HERE OF KEY ADVICE FROM TEACHERS AND PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK. TICK
WHEN YOU HAVE DEALT WITH EACH POINT**