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CENTRE FOR ACADEMIC PRACTICE

C*f*AP

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**05 STUDY SKILLS**

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S5 ACTIVE REVISION

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Use this pack to help you to:

- revise effectively
- learn more efficiently
- use your revision time wisely.

### **Have you planned your revision?**

If your immediate response is no, perhaps you should start with Pack S4 Starting to Revise, so that you can do your initial planning.

This pack focuses on the techniques you can use to revise.

### **How do you revise?**

In the past, you may have spent hours revising by reading over and over again and hoping that some of it will stick. This approach is not always effective and it is certainly time-consuming. You need to take an 'active' role in your revision, so that you learn, understand and remember.

### **Deciding which revision techniques to use**

#### ***Example 1***

Think for a few minutes of what you are planning to revise. Can you think of ways to vary how you revise in each session? Note down any ideas you have below.

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#### ***Response***

You may have suggested varying the topics you need to revise and using different techniques like the following:

- making notes
- reading
- testing yourself
- making lists
- making outlines
- working with someone else
- making a tape recording
- using a memory aid

You may have thought of other methods.

The main idea is to plan ways to make your revision active, so that you are doing something and can stay involved in what you are revising. This will make your revision much more effective.

### *Notes*

Consider how making notes can help you to revise. Clearly you need to read and understand in order to pick out the important information and write it down concisely.

Make notes that are:

- brief
- contain key facts/arguments/points
- easy to file so that you can find them again.

### *Reading*

This has to be active to be effective. Decide why you are reading something and what you want to get out of it. You may like to write questions which you answer as you read and find out.

### *Testing yourself*

It is useful to practise answering the type of questions you will meet in the assessment. You can get these from old exam papers held in the library. Spend some time thinking, reading, checking and preparing your answers.

You could mark your answers yourself, using the criteria for your course/module (usually found in the course/module guide)

When you feel you have revised a topic well you may find it helpful to practise answering questions under exam conditions.

### *Lists*

Lists can be a quick and easy way of helping you think, plan, find information and do something with it.

### *Outlines*

You could make outlines of how you plan to answer specific essay questions, or of procedures, arguments, etc. They can save you time and you can add to them as you find out more information.

### *Other people*

You may want to get together with fellow learners, (if you have any) to help each other revise. You could try out test questions and share your answers, or prepare an answer together, or set each other questions. By working with someone else you have the opportunity to share each other's knowledge and help each other to think more deeply.

Ask your family to help you by asking you questions or by listening while you talk something through.

### *Taping*

You may find it useful to record some revision on tape. You can listen to it while you are doing something else as well.

*Memory aids*

Find ways of learning difficult things by using mnemonics. Mnemonic means 'trick of the memory'. For example:

- There's a little port left in the bottle (for would-be sailors to help remind them that port is left and starboard right on a boat).
- Using initial letters to remember a list of things, e.g. ROYGBIV for the colours of the rainbow.

**Checking your progress**

Checking your progress will help you stay actively involved in your revision. Although it may be time-consuming it is useful to check how well your revision is going from time to time, and to make any necessary changes to your plans.

**Example 2**

Think of the last week or so of your revision and think about how well your revision is going.

Use the table below to note how well you are getting on.

Topics that are going well	Topics that cause concern and why
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Response**

Use the questions below to work out what you can do for any topics that are causing you concern.

Can you try different techniques to help you learn? Do you need help on anything you don't understand? Who can you ask for help? Do you need to spend more time on any area? Do you need to revise any of your revision plans?

It is worthwhile to review your progress like this from time to time so that you can change your timetable where necessary, perhaps by giving more time to some topics and less to others.

## Final revision

### Example 3

What do you plan to do in the last few days before the exam? Note your ideas below.

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### Response

If you have had an organised programme of revision and if you have revised and checked that you understand the work all the way through your course, you should feel fairly relaxed about the exam, and you won't need to try to cram everything into your head at the last minute.

You may want to check your revision notes, lists and outlines, and listen to any useful tapes you have made, but the night before your exam it is probably better to check that you have everything you need to do the exam and that you know the time and place, etc.

Try to relax a bit just before your exam. You can still do some revision, but do something else as well that will take your mind off things.

### Action plan

In this pack you have looked at ways to keep involved and interested in your revision. Use these ideas to plan your revision for the next week.

Note down the time of the planned revision, e.g. '7.30-8.30 pm Tues. the topics you will cover and the techniques you will use. After each session note any comments on how the session went.

Revision – week ending:			
Time of session	Topics	Techniques to use	Comments and ideas

### What else?

Other packs related to this one are:

S8 *Reading the exam paper* – to help you assess what is required.