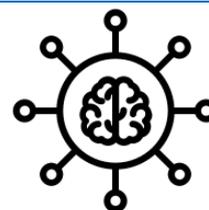

Reducing Your Notes



Aim	Tips	How to start
The aim of these activities is to reduce the amount of notes you are revising from. This will save you precious time in the days just before exams.	This needs to be started early. It will not work if it is done only days before an exam.	Pick a subject and topic to begin and using your class notes select one of the methods below.

Cue Cards

Note or cue cards are always handy for when you're out and about. List definitions and rules, you need to know. Or write key words from which you can fill in the gaps to tell the whole story. *Use different coloured pens or paper to help with word association and grouping of key words.

These are also handy for learning language vocabulary. Once filled in, these cards will allow you to reclaim time that would otherwise be wasted -on the bus, in the queue at the supermarket -there's no limit.

Mind Maps/Spider Diagrams

Take a topic, and list the main topics/themes. For each theme list the main points, definitions, key words and examples. The aim is to have a single piece of paper (A3 or A4) for each topic. You will not be able to write down everything, so prioritise the key information. Images and symbols can also be used alongside/instead of words to help visualise key information.

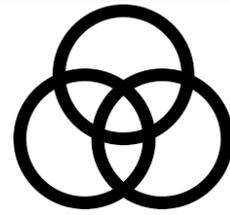
Diagrams, Tables and Timelines

Some subjects allow you to display key information in a different format, especially useful when you are trying to make sense of a series of events (if displayed chronologically). You can also try this for a specific character in a story/plot, you can show their involvement, impact and influence throughout the play/text. For pictures it is said "A picture paints a thousand words" ...enough said. Tables are very useful for displaying the key information and showing possible relationships between the information.

*Recording of Notes

Once you have reduced your notes, record yourself or someone else reading your notes through. You can then listen back as often as you want to.

Visual Organisers

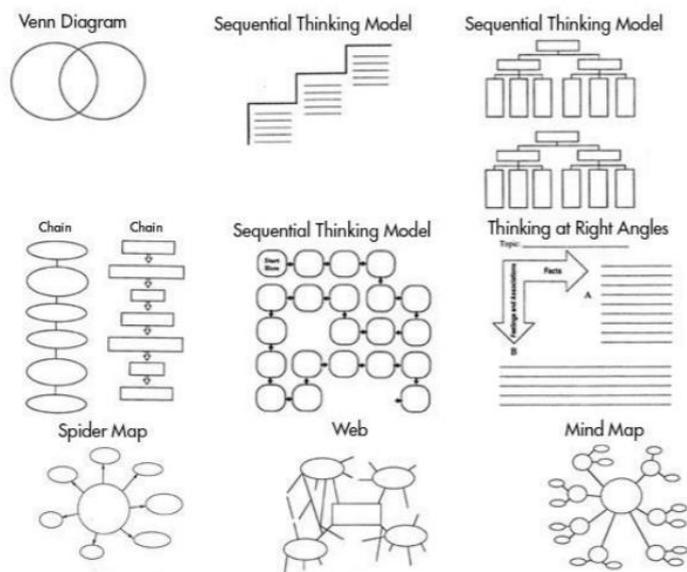


Aim	Tips	How to start
The aim of this is to get away from reading notes or highlighting, and start some active revision.	Stick to subjects where there are obvious links (Science, English, Sport)	Pick one of the diagrams shown below and add the details of a plot, or topic from one of your lessons.

Visual or Graphic Organisers

A picture paints a thousand words...well this is kind of similar. For subjects where there are processes or key events in chronological order or obvious links and relationships a graphic organiser can be a welcome break from lots of written text.

You need to reconstruct your revised topics and make the links or connections as you go. Below are a few examples, I'm sure your familiar with one or two of them already. We remember information better when we have taken an active part in producing it, rather than it being given to us –can you do the same using one of these models?



*Watch videos

Use videos and appropriate YouTube links explaining and demonstrating what it is you are revising

*Literacy Doughnut

Using three circles, prioritise the important information or words in the inner circle and then, in descending priority, the middle and the outer. Concentrate initially on remembering the inner circle, then expand out once confident.

*Role-play

Either in class or with peers/family, role play the topic or situation that you are revising. Visualising 'real life' conversations and actions help with memory recall.

*Post it party

Place key words/phrases onto post it notes and place them around your house, in rooms and on objects that you may associate with the word. Eg. An energy equation in science may be placed by the kettle, key words to do with the human body may be placed around the bedroom, plant reproduction key words could be placed on house plants, etc. This will help with visual association.

Quick Retrieval



Aim	Tips	How to start
The aim of this is to test your knowledge of the basic information. You need to master these facts to be able to fully explain them.	Stick to simple facts such as dates, character features, timelines, definitions and equations. Use knowledge organisers.	Pick a subject and particular topic, and use your knowledge organisers to give yourself 10 simple questions

Self-Quizzing

This is one of the most effective quick revision activities out there –it only takes a matter of minutes and can be done anywhere and anytime. Simply pick a subject, pick a topic and write down 10 quick retrieval (basic facts) questions. Aim to retrieve the key facts and information; such as dates, names, places, quotes, definitions, formulas and equations. On the reverse answer the questions.

Flash Cards

Not to be confused with a cue cards, these have either a single word (topic/part of a topic) or diagram or Mnemonic on one side, and the information on the other side. These cards can be used both directions and are great when revising with a friend or family member. Once presented with the one side, you repeat from memory as much as possible from the other side.

*You could also use them as a mix and match activity, through writing key words on one card and the meaning on the other, shuffle them and match them back together. This can be done individually or as a game with a friend/family member.

Teach Somebody

A great way to learn, is to teach somebody else. You simply need either a small whiteboard and pen, or a notepad and pen. Then select at random a topic or aspect of a subject to “teach” to someone else. Limit yourself to 3 minutes (set a timer) –want to assess how effective you were as a teacher –either set the “student” a simple Retrieval task (Low Stakes Quiz) or ask them to repeat it back –can you find the mistakes?

*Making connections

“See” the question and think around the topic. Make a story around the topic. Use key words in random sentences in conversation.

Past Papers



Aim	Tips	How to start
The aim of this is to process and refine your revision to meet the demands of an exam.	Learn the meaning of command words (describe, explain, evaluate...). Use the mark scheme to mark your answers.	Search on the internet for 'past exam papers' for your subject and exam board. Your teachers will also have a stash of them ready to use.

Past Papers

This is the single-handedly the best revision tool you can use, as long as you complete the process fully.

Part 1

Sit the paper under exam conditions. Make sure you have the correct exam board/subject/tier. Stick to the time given to you on the paper.

This will allow you to become familiar with what will happen in the summer, practice your timings and understand what the paper will look like. The more relaxed you are in the summer the better you will perform.

Part 2

Mark the paper using the official mark scheme. As you go through correct any mistakes that you have made using a different colour pen. These mistakes should then form your next self-quizzing activity. You will learn as much by marking your paper as you will be completing it.

Part 3

If they are available then read the examiner's report for the paper you have completed. This will give you an idea of the main errors and misconceptions made by other students who have completed this exam.

Practice Essay Writing



Aim	Tips	How to start
The aim of this is to perfect your extended writing skills by focussing on both the knowledge needed and the structure required.	Make sure you know what extended writing answers will be included for each subject. Practice this for all subjects, not just English.	Look at the past papers and rewrite any of the extended writing questions. These may be marked with a * or may be worth 6 or more marks.

Essay Writing/Extended Writing

Let's aim to perfect your extended writing technique –remembering that good spelling and grammar help too.

The main thing to remember is always answer the question, this seems obvious, but to do so, we must understand the command word and what it means for your response. For example, what's the difference between a Describe and an Explain question. Search "exam command words" on the internet for a definite list and their meanings.

Secondly, don't waffle or give your personal opinion (unless required) –try and avoid telling a story –"I" or "I think" are not useful outside of subjects that require a personal opinion, like RE.

Structure your writing, use an interesting introduction, 4-5 paragraphs (normal essay) and a clever conclusion –as a minimum. Try and link your paragraphs to create a flow which will ensure your response is better received by the marker.

Finally, if you have time, read the original question as you start each new paragraph, this will encourage you to stay on track and answer the question –to help this, always try and either start or finish each paragraph with a topic/question relevant sentence.

*Decoding exam questions

Differentiate between the command words of a question and the subject-specific words. Have two separate colours and highlight which is which. The words that we left over are additional language that can be ignored. This will help in processing what exactly it is you are being asked to write/answer.

*Sentence starters

Create a bank of sentence starters that you can use in your essay writing. Practice using these in the practice writing, until you become familiar with the phrases.

*Organising your page

When practising essay writing, it may be useful to separate your page into sections, using boxes or flow charts. You can then visually link the sections together.

Revision Strategies for Students with Dyslexia

- Visual (spatial): make large colourful posters of important information, or highlight key passages in a different colours. Stick post-its where you will see them e.g. by the sink so you read them whilst brushing your teeth.
- Aural (auditory-musical): record lessons, or record and listen to your revision notes.
- Verbal (linguistic): explain your essay structure, or key concepts to someone else. The act of having to mentally structure and then verbalise a concept to someone else can help with your own understanding and ability to remember.

Organisation Strategies

- Deal with printed materials as soon as you receive them, check the contents list to make sure everything is there.
- Colour-coding: keep all class notes, essays and materials on a particular subject colour coded and filed together.
- Identify what's important: use highlighters, post-its or annotations so you can find information easily.
- Use a planner: use your phone, computer or a handwritten planner to keep track of projects and deadlines on a daily basis. Work back from the deadline and set yourself realistic goals to complete the assignment on time.
- Reminders: set yourself reminders on your phone for classes, tutor meetings and course deadlines.
- Minimise distractions: set yourself time for a task and switch off your phone, tv and radio. It can also help to keep your study sessions short, but regular.