REVISION TECHNIQUES

LIONHEART
EDUCATIONAL
TRUST

Independent Study

Independent study (or revision) is an essential element to success and should be;

Frequent
Structured
Spaced out
Active

The habits and skills needed for independent study need to be **learnt** and **practiced.**

Leaving this until just before an exam will be too late!

Most courses studied at Key Stage 4 are assessed through several end of course exams.
These mainly take place in the Summer of Year 11.

The focus of many of these exams is the **retrieval** and **application** of key knowledge.

This means you need to be able to **remember and use a lot of information.**

How We Learn

Our short-term memory is designed to be just that, it has limited capacity.
Our aim is to try and put our learning in to our long-term memory.

The secret to success is to **regularly revisit the knowledge being learnt** (known as '**retrieval practice**').
Over time, **retrieval practice** helps to transfer the knowledge from the short-term memory to the long-term memory.

Our working memory is rather small, and we easily forget knowledge at first. To secure knowledge and skills into our long-term memory **we must forget and revisit it several times.**

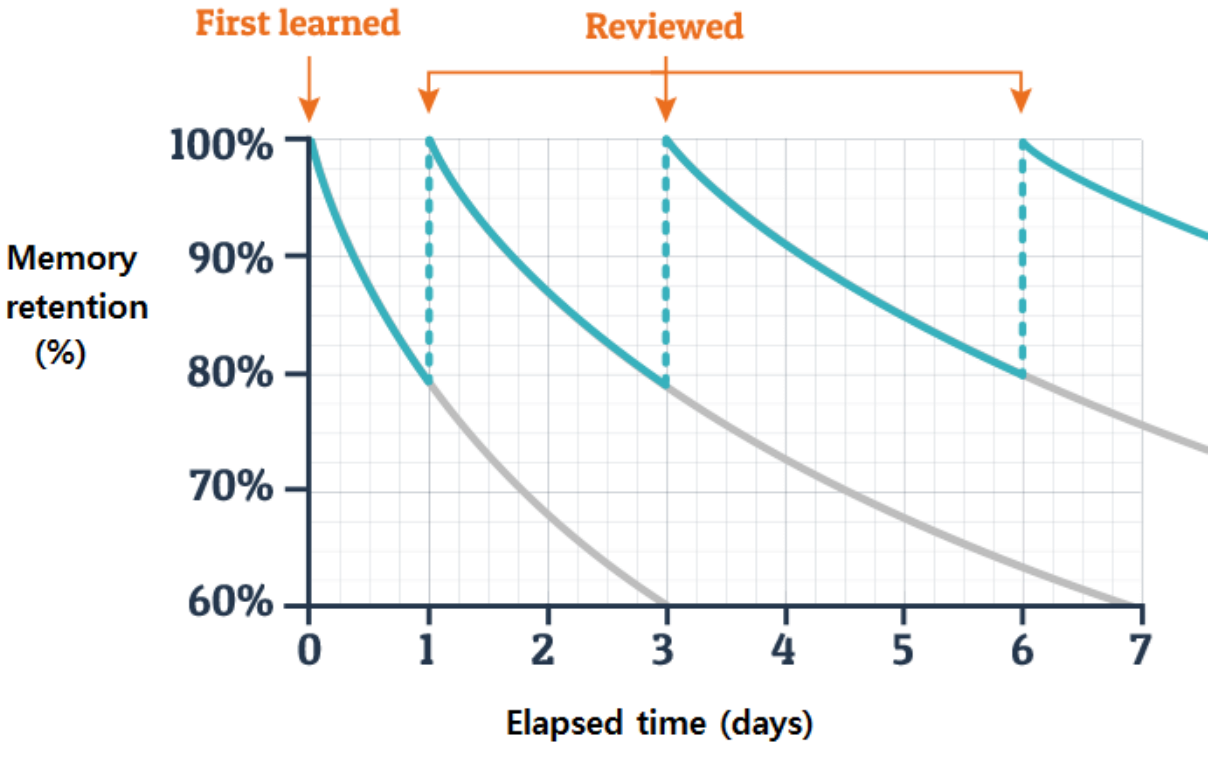
Once stored in our long-term memory (which is almost limitless) we can retrieve it easily, for example in an exam.

For things to be really remembered **we must keep revisiting them**.

The grey lines on the graph opposite show the rate of forgetting if retrieval or recall doesn't take place.

What this graph shows is how distributed practice can slow down the effects of forgetting.

The more we revisit and practice key knowledge the more we will be able to remember.



Independent Study

Regular retrieval practice is important because it helps to move learning to our long-term memories.

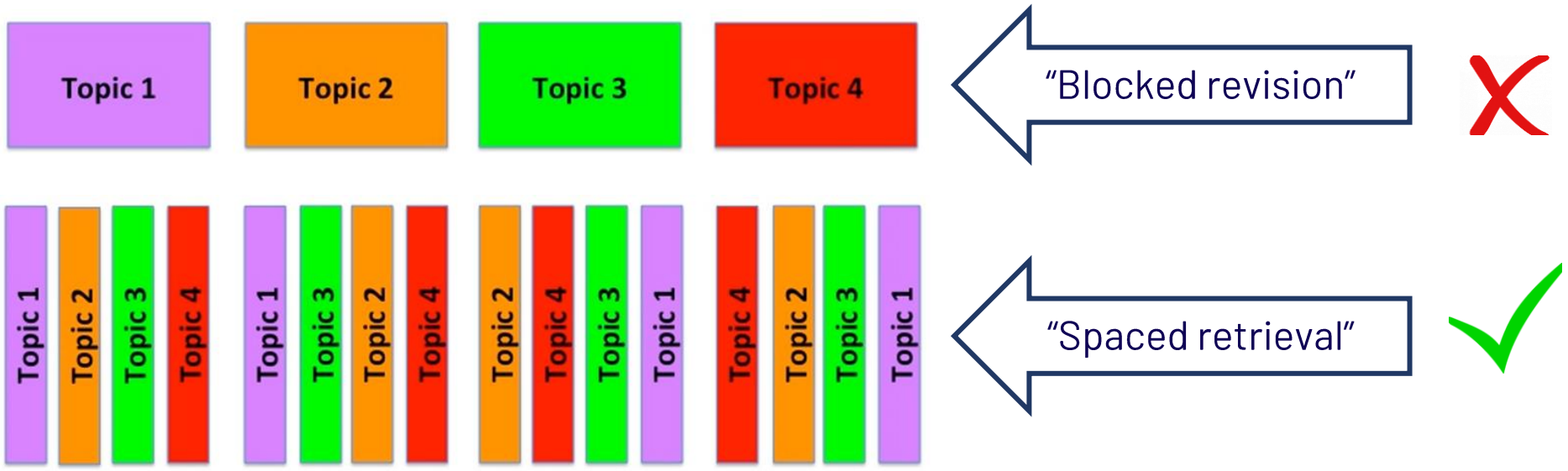
In class we use regular 'retrieval tasks / quizzes' to check how much you are remembering and to practice retrieving important knowledge.

This should be supported by independent study / revision and retrieval at home.

Retrieval should be spaced out.

'Cramming' for a particular subject or topic is not the most effective method for learning.

Instead, **retrieval** should be broken down into small chunks that are repeated frequently



Health & Wellbeing

Anxiety can sometimes increase when young people feel tired, run down and overwhelmed.

Overall resilience depends on one's physical and mental health, which can be strengthened by:

1. Movement / exercise (go for a walk or a run, play sport or go for a swim or a bike ride)

2. Balance and break up revision with treats, this could be watching your favourite TV show, playing a computer game or doing something else you enjoy.

3. Eat a well-balanced diet: nutritious food rather than junk food

4. Regular and adequate sleep.

5. Keep hydrated – drink water to keep hydrated and avoid energy drinks and caffeine.

Independent Study – A Time & Place

Research shows that independent study is most effective when the conditions represent an 'exam' environment.

- Sit at a desk.
- Avoid distractions: NO PHONES/ MUSIC.
- Work in a quiet space.

Find out when your library is open for silent revision / study / reading.

One of the most important things you can do now is to devise a **STUDY TIMETABLE** and then **'stick to it.'**

The timetable should include **ALL** your subjects.

You should make sure you complete an adequate amount of independent study / revision each week.

40 – 50 MINUTES per subject should be spent on revision / study each week.

50 Minute study / revision followed by a 10-minute break.

	3.10pm - 4.00pm	4.45 – 5.00pm	5pm – 5.20pm	5.20pm – 6.20pm
Monday	BOOST	English Literature: A Christmas Carol	Break	Maths
Tuesday	Revision in the library (Design Technology)	Science	Break	English Literature: An Inspector Calls
Wednesday	BOOST	English Literature: Macbeth	Break	Design Technology
Thursday	BOOST	Maths	Break	History
Friday		Science		
Saturday				
Sunday		Health and Social Care	Break	English Literature: Poetry

MONDAY				
TUESDAY				
WEDNESDAY				
THURSDAY				
FRIDAY				
SATURDAY				
SUNDAY				

Active Study

Retrieval / independent study should be **ACTIVE** not passive.

To get the most out of a revision source (knowledge organiser/revision guide/workbook / class notes), you should study and revise sections and then **actively engage** with the information.

You should not just read or copy the text.

The most important part of any revision process is to correct the work (ideally in a different coloured pen).

You should make sure that you write down the correct answers to anything that was incorrect.
Don't just mark it right or wrong.

Only highlighting

Only rereading texts

'Highlighting and rereading should not be stopped... but we need to understand that highlighting and rereading is only the beginning of the journey'

- Look, cover, write, check ✓
- Blank sheet retrieval ✓
- Completing quizzes ✓
- Creating mind maps ✓
- Using flashcards ✓
- Elaborative interrogation ✓
- Dual coding ✓

1. Look, Cover, Write, Check

One example of an effective revision technique is **look, cover, write, check.**

This technique requires you to study a specific topic or section of a topic, and then retrieve the information to see what you can remember.

The important element is to check your answers and correct anything you have missed out or got wrong.

Retrieving the key knowledge and checking and correcting your answers makes this an active activity.

1. LOOK

Spend some time reading over a specific section of your chosen revision material - this could be a knowledge organiser, a revision guide or your class workbook.
For example: Spend 10-15 minutes reading over a specific section of the Macbeth knowledge organiser.

2. COVER

Cover or remove your revision material.
Remember, effective retrieval involves recalling key learning from memory.
For example: Cover or remove the Macbeth knowledge organiser.

3. WRITE

Write down everything you can remember about the section you were studying / reading.
For example: Using an A3 piece of paper, write down everything you can remember from the section of the Macbeth knowledge organiser that you studied.

4. CHECK

Revisit your revision materials and check if your notes are correct.
For example: Uncover your Macbeth knowledge organiser. Check your work to see if your notes are correct. Correct any mistakes in green pen. Add in any missed information in green pen.

The most important part of the process is to correct your work. Make sure that you write down the correct answers to anything that was incorrect (you could use a green pen for this like we do in school).

Questions to ask yourself after completing look, cover, write, check:

- Was this strategy effective in helping me to revise and remember this information or would a different strategy have been more effective?
- Which parts of the topic am I able to remember?
- Which parts of the topic am I less confident with and need to revise/study further?
- Do I need to ask my teacher for additional support with a particular part of the topic?
- What should I revise next?

2. Blank Sheet Retrieval

Another technique is **blank sheet retrieval**, this is like **look, cover write, check** but misses out the looking and covering. This allows you to really assess what you can and can't remember.

This technique requires you to write down everything you can remember about a specific topic.

The important element is to then check your answers and correct anything you have missed out or got wrong.

Retrieving the key knowledge and checking and correcting your answers makes this an active activity.

1. WRITE

Write down everything you can remember about a specific topic.
For example: Using an A3 piece of paper, write down everything you can remember about Biology B18:Biodiversity and Ecosystems

2. CHECK

Revisit your revision materials and check if your notes are correct.
For example: Use your science knowledge organiser. Check your work to see if your notes are correct. Correct any mistakes in green pen. Add in any missed information in green pen.

The most important part of the process is to correct your work. Make sure that you write down the correct answers to anything that was incorrect (you could use a green pen for this like we do in school).

Questions to ask yourself after completing blank sheet retrieval:

- Was this strategy effective in helping me to revise and remember this information or would a different strategy have been more effective?
- Which parts of the topic am I able to remember?
- Which parts of the topic am I less confident with and need to revise/study further?
- Do I need to ask my teacher for additional support with a particular part of the topic?
- What should I revise next?

3. Quizzing

Quizzing can be completed on your own, with friends or with family at home. It is an effective method or retrieval practice.

The important element is to check your answers and correct anything you have missed out or got wrong. Retrieving the key knowledge and checking and correcting your answers makes this an active activity.

1. REVISE

Spend some time reading over a specific section of your chosen revision material - this could be a knowledge organiser, a revision guide or your class workbook.

2. CREATE

Individual: After 10 – 15 minutes of reading the revision material, use the revision material to create a series of questions based on that subject area. Ideally you should include questions that involve short answers and longer answers.

Paired: After 10 – 15 minutes of reading the revision material, you and your partner should individually use the revision material to create a series of questions based on that subject area. Ideally you should include questions that involve short answers and longer answers.
You should produce your own questions, do not work together on this stage.

3. QUIZ

Individual: With your revision material covered, try to answer your own questions. When completing this individually it is best to write your answers down.

Paired: With your revision material covered, take it in turns to ask each other the questions you have prepared. This can be done verbally, but make sure you keep track of any answers you don't get right, or any areas you couldn't remember.

Family: If completing this at home, you can skip part 2 and move straight to the quizzing. Someone at home can take your revision material and ask you questions from it. This can be done verbally, but make sure you keep track of any answers you don't get right, or any areas you couldn't remember.

4. CHECK

The most important part of the process is to correct your work. Make sure that you write down the correct answers to anything that was incorrect (you could use a green pen for this like we do in school).

Questions to ask yourself after completing a quiz:

- Was this strategy effective in helping me to revise and remember this information or would a different strategy have been more effective?
- Which parts of the topic am I able to remember?
- Which parts of the topic am I less confident with and need to revise/study further?
- Do I need to ask my teacher for additional support with a particular part of the topic?
- What should I revise next?

4. Mind Maps

Mind Mapping is a process that involves a combination of text, images, colour and visual-spatial arrangements.

They are a great way to categorise information and knowledge.

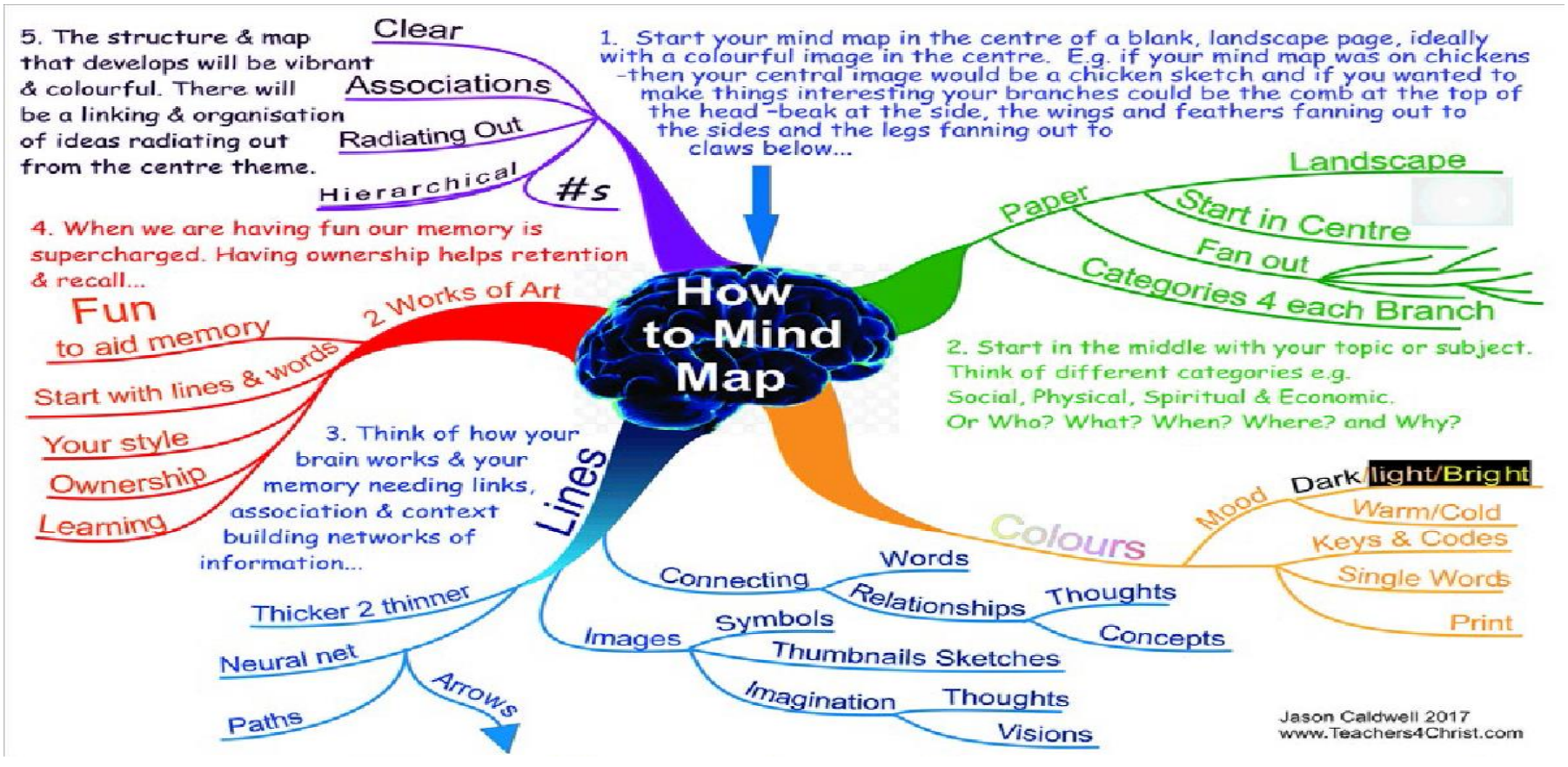
Once completed, they can be a great revision tool.

- Once you have completed a mind map - you could take a section of the mind map and read it through, then cover it over and see how much of that section you can remember (**look, cover, write check**).
- You could take a section of the mind map and create a **quiz** on it. Leave it for a few days, and then see if you can answer the questions you have written.
- You could hand your mind map to a friend or a member of your family and ask them to **quiz** you on a specific section.

The important element is to check your answers and correct anything you have missed out or got wrong.

Retrieving the key knowledge and checking and correcting your answers makes this an active activity.

The following video looks at how to create a mind map:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tIpK1-yKWk0



Questions to ask yourself after revising with a mind map:

- Was this strategy effective in helping me to revise and remember this information or would a different strategy have been more effective?
- Which parts of the topic am I able to remember?
- Which parts of the topic am I less confident with and need to revise/study further?
- Do I need to ask my teacher for additional support with a particular part of the topic?
- What should I revise next?

5. Flashcards

Flashcards are a valuable revision tool for any student. They allow you to test your knowledge of definitions and key ideas – an essential part of successful exam preparation.

Flashcards are sets of small, double-sided cards used to learn and revise details, keywords and vocabulary. They are useful for learning the relationship between two pieces of information. You write a question or key terms on the front and then the answer or definition on the back.

Flashcards should be used to test your knowledge, not just to condense your notes further.

We see people list bullet points on flashcards that they carry around with them to reread. Rereading notes is a passive learning activity so is not an economical use of your revision time. Instead, use **flashcards** as a quick way of testing what you know.

1. CREATE THE FRONT

On the front of the card, write a key term or question.

2. CREATE THE BACK

On the back of the card, answer that question or write the definition for the term.

3. RETRIEVAL

Use the flashcard as part of a retrieval task, try to answer/ remember the definition on the front before checking the answer on the back.
This could be a written response, or if you are working with a friend or family member it could be a verbal response.

4. CHECK

Check your answer, If the answer is incorrect move the card to the back of the pile so there's another opportunity to practice within the same session.

The most important part of the process is to correct your work. Make sure that you write down the correct answers to anything that was incorrect (you could use a green pen for this like we do in school).

Questions to ask yourself after revising using flashcards:

- Was this strategy effective in helping me to revise and remember this information or would a different strategy have been more effective?
- Which parts of the topic am I able to remember?
- Which parts of the topic am I less confident with and need to revise/study further?
- Do I need to ask my teacher for additional support with a particular part of the topic?
- What should I revise next?

6. Elaborative Interrogation

The term **elaboration** can be used to mean a lot of different things. However, when we are talking about studying using **elaboration**, it involves explaining and describing ideas with many details.

Elaboration also involves making connections among ideas you are trying to learn and connecting the material to your own experiences, memories, and day-to-day life.

The word **interrogation** means to question. So, when you use **elaborative interrogation**, you ask yourself questions about how and why things work, and then produce the answers to these questions.

The specific questions that you ask yourself will depend on the topics you are studying, for example:

- How does x work?
- Why does x happen?
- When did x happen?
- What caused x?
- What is the result of x?

1. LIST

Start by making a list of all the ideas you need to learn from your class materials.

2. ELABORATE

Then, go down the list and ask yourself questions about how these ideas work and why.

3. CONFIRM THE ANSWERS

As you ask yourself questions, go through your revision materials (e.g., your textbook, class notes, knowledge organiser, any materials your teacher has provided, etc.) and look for the answers to your questions.

4. CONNECT

As you continue to elaborate on the ideas you are learning, make connections between multiple ideas to-be-learned and explain how they work together. A good way to do this is to take two ideas and think about ways they are similar and ways they are different.

For example:
'The hunger for wealth and power can destroy lives.'
How does Shakespeare's exploration of this theme in Macbeth differ to Dickens' exploration in A Christmas Carol?

How do Shakespeare and Dickens use the appearance of supernatural guests to drive the plot in Macbeth and A Christmas Carol?

6. Elaborative Interrogation

5. COVER

So far we have suggested using elaborative interrogation as you study your revision materials. At the start, you can use your revision materials to help you and fill in gaps as you elaborate.

However, ideally, you should work your way up to describing and explaining the ideas you are learning on your own, without your revision materials in front of you.

In other words, you should practice retrieval of the information!

6. CHECK

Revisit your revision materials and check if your notes are correct.

The most important part of the process is to correct your work. Make sure that you write down the correct answers to anything that was incorrect (you could use a green pen for this like we do in school).

Questions to ask yourself after using elaborative interrogation:

- Was this strategy effective in helping me to revise and remember this information or would a different strategy have been more effective?
- Which parts of the topic am I able to remember?
- Which parts of the topic am I less confident with and need to revise/study further?
- Do I need to ask my teacher for additional support with a particular part of the topic?
- What should I revise next?

7. Dual Coding

Dual coding is the process of combining verbal materials with visual materials.

When you have the same information in two formats (words and visuals) it gives you two ways of remembering the information later on. Combining visuals with words is an effective way to study .

There are many ways to visually represent material...

1. Take information that you are trying to learn and draw visuals to go along with it.

2. Look at visuals and in your own words explain what they mean.

3. Try to come up with different ways to represent the information visually, for example... a timeline.

4. Try to come up with different ways to represent the information visually, for example... a diagram of parts that work together.

5. Try to come up with different ways to represent the information visually, for example... a cartoon strip.

What should you do after you use dual coding?

After you have compared the visuals and words that describe or explain the idea you are trying to learn, it's time to start retrieving the information on your own.

Work your way up to the point where you can put away your revision materials and both write out the ideas in words and draw pictures, diagrams, or other graphics to go along with them, seeing how much you can remember.

Revisit your revision materials and check if your notes are correct.

The most important part of the process is to correct your work. Make sure that you write down the correct answers to anything that was incorrect (you could use a green pen for this like we do in school).

Questions to ask yourself after using dual coding:

- Was this strategy effective in helping me to revise and remember this information or would a different strategy have been more effective?
- Which parts of the topic am I able to remember?
- Which parts of the topic am I less confident with and need to revise/study further?
- Do I need to ask my teacher for additional support with a particular part of the topic?
- What should I revise next?

METACOGNITION

What?

Metacognition means thinking about and managing your own thinking.

It involves being aware of how you learn and using that awareness to improve your learning.

Why?

- Metacognition develops students as active learners rather than passive learners.
- It has the potential to add an average of seven months to students' progress.
- Metacognition helps students to become aware of their own skills and thoughts, allowing them to control their thinking.
- It develops true independence – where students think about their own learning (strengths, gaps, how to approach tasks etc)
- When embedded, it helps students in making links between concepts and solving problems within and beyond the classroom.

There are <u>three phases</u> to effective metacognition.

When we're being metacognitive, we make our thought processes clearer. We think about:

- How we are going to tackle tasks/questions (we plan)
- How well we are solving/answering them (we monitor)
- What we might do differently another time (we evaluate).

1 Planning

During the planning phase, students should focus on the learning goal set by the teacher or the demands of the exam question. They should carefully consider their approach to the task, identifying which strategies and techniques will best help them achieve success.

At this stage, it is useful to ask:

- 'What is the task asking me to do?'
- 'Have I seen tasks like this before?'
- 'What strategies do I know that would be helpful?'
- 'What's the same and what's different from what I have done before?'
- 'What might I need to support me?'

2 Monitoring

During the monitoring phase, students should implement their plan and monitor the progress that they are making towards the learning goal.

They might decide to make changes to the strategies they are using if they are not working.

At this stage, it is useful to ask:

- 'Is my chosen strategy working?'
- 'Are there different ways to solve this task?'
- 'Has my teacher shown me anything that might help me here?'
- 'Have I made any obvious mistakes?'
- 'Have I used this strategy before? Was it effective?'

3 Evaluation

During the evaluation phase, students should assess the effectiveness of their chosen strategy in achieving their learning goal.

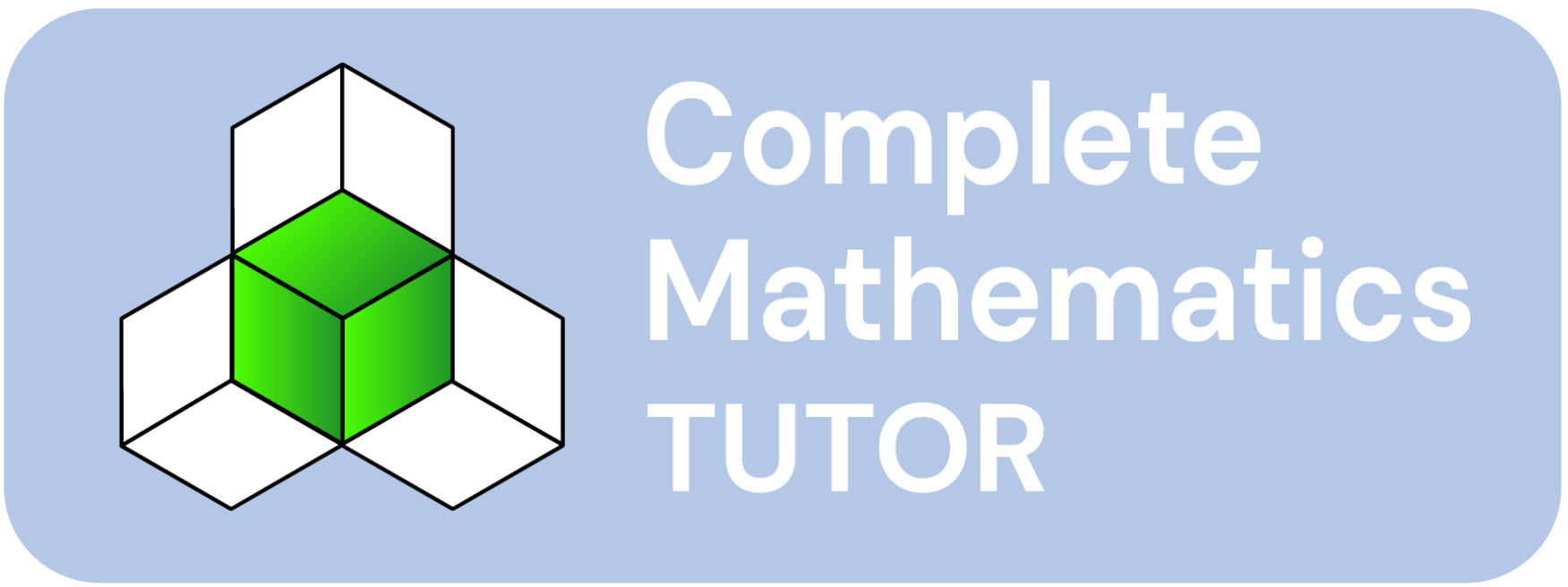
At this stage, it is useful to ask:

- 'Does my answer make sense? How do I know? Can I back it up?'
- 'Is there a way I can check my answer?'
- 'Am I sure my answer is correct?'
- 'Can I explain to someone else what I have done and why I did it?'
- 'If I did this task again, would I choose a different approach?'

Additional Resources

In addition to the techniques listed in this pack, many online platforms are useful for quizzing and retrieval, platforms like Complete Maths, SENECA.

You should ask your teachers which platform they recommend for their subject.



You can also find past exam papers on the websites for the different exam boards.

Attempting these papers and then asking your teachers to look over the papers is a good method of practice and preparation for your exams.

You should ask your teachers which website and papers you could look at and attempt.