

Supporting Your Child Through GCSE Exams: A Guide for Parents

Section 1: Things You Need to Know

Understanding GCSEs - GCSEs (General Certificate of Secondary Education) are crucial qualifications that students in the UK typically take at the end of Year 11. These exams cover a range of subjects and are essential for further education and career opportunities.

Key Dates and Deadlines -

- Mock Exams: Usually held in November and February of Year 11.
- GCSE Exams 2025: Start from the week commencing Monday, 5 May and finish on Friday, 20 June.
- Results Day: GCSE results day is Thursday 21st August.

Exam Boards - Different subjects may be examined by different boards, such as AQA, Edexcel, OCR, and WJEC. Each board has specific syllabuses and exam formats, so it's important to know which board your child is studying with.

Grading System - GCSEs are graded from 9 to 1, with 9 being the highest grade. Here is a breakdown of the new grading system and its equivalents:

- Grade 9: Higher than an A*
- Grade 8: Between A* and A
- Grade 7: Equivalent to an A
- Grade 6: Between B and A
- Grade 5: Between B and C (considered a strong pass)
- Grade 4: Equivalent to a C (standard pass)
- Grade 3: Between D and E
- Grade 2: Between E and F
- Grade 1: Between F and G



Applied Subjects (BTEC and other vocational qualifications) - For applied subjects, the grading system is different and includes Pass, Merit, Distinction, and Distinction*:

- Level 2 Distinction*: Equivalent to a GCSE grade 8.5
- Level 2 Distinction: Equivalent to a GCSE grade 7
- Level 2 Merit: Equivalent to a GCSE grade 5.5
- Level 2 Pass: Equivalent to a GCSE grade 4
- Level 1 Distinction: Equivalent to a GCSE grade 3
- Level 1 Merit: Equivalent to a GCSE grade 2
- Level 1 Pass: Equivalent to a GCSE grade 1



Section 2: Things You Can Do:

Supporting at Home

1. **Create a Study Environment:** Ensure your child has a quiet, well-lit space to study, free from distractions.
2. **Healthy Lifestyle:** Encourage regular sleep, a balanced diet, and physical activity to keep their mind and body healthy.
3. **Emotional Support:** Be there to listen and provide reassurance. Stress and anxiety are common, so your support is crucial.

Resources

1. **Online Resources:** Websites like BBC Bitesize, Save My Exams, and The Parents' Guide offer valuable revision materials and tips.
2. **School Resources:** Encourage your child to use resources provided by their teachers and school.
3. **Books and Guides:** Invest in revision guides and workbooks specific to their exam board and subjects.

Additional Resources

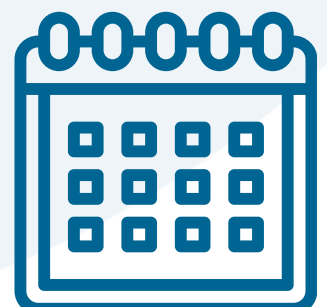
1. [Savemyexams](#): Offers extensive study notes, past papers, and practice questions across all GCSE subjects.
2. [Seneca Learning](#): Provides interactive revision materials and quizzes for various subjects.
3. [The Student Room](#): A forum where students can share resources, ask questions, and support each other.
4. [Physics and Maths Tutor](#): Offers free resources, including notes, past papers, and revision guides for science and math subjects.
5. [Tes](#): Provides a range of teaching resources and revision materials.
6. [Get Revising](#): Helps students create revision timetables and access a variety of study resources.

Organising Revision

1. [Make a Revision Timetable](#): Help your child create a timetable that breaks down their revision into manageable chunks. Include regular breaks and time for relaxation. Aim for around 10 hours a week over all revision.
2. [Prioritise Subjects](#): Focus on weaker subjects or topics first, but ensure all subjects are covered.
3. [Use Active Learning Techniques](#): Encourage methods like summarising notes, using flashcards, and practising past papers.

Example of a Weekly Plan:

- Monday: History - World War I causes
- Tuesday: Math - Algebra basics
- Wednesday: English Literature - Themes in "Macbeth"
- Thursday: Science - Cell biology
- Friday: French - Vocabulary for daily routines
- Saturday: Geography - Climate change
- Sunday: Review and practice questions



Changing Activities Closer to Exams

1. **Focus on Past Papers:** As exams approach, shift focus to practising past papers under timed conditions.
2. **Short, Intensive Sessions:** Shorten study sessions but increase their frequency to keep information fresh.
3. **Relaxation Techniques:** Teach relaxation techniques like deep breathing or mindfulness to manage exam stress.

Planning Time

1. **Set Realistic Goals:** Help your child set achievable goals for each study session.
2. **Balance Study and Leisure:** Ensure they have time for hobbies and relaxation to avoid burnout.
3. **Regular Review:** Periodically review the timetable and adjust it based on progress and upcoming exams.

Key Research

- Research shows that a balanced approach to revision, incorporating regular breaks and varied study techniques, is most effective.
- Studies highlight the importance of parental support in reducing exam stress and improving performance.

