

Individual Session 4: Revision Skills

Aims:

- For the student to explore their best learning style and look at appropriate revision techniques according to these learning preferences.
- To give students tips and confidence about preparing for revision.
- Where relevant, to help students create realistic revision timetables.

VAK Questionnaire

The student should select their most likely response from each row below (only 1 option per row). At the bottom of the questionnaire, the student adds up the number of responses per column to find out if they prefer Visual, Auditory or Kinaesthetic revising styles.

<i>When operating new equipment for the first time I...</i>	read the instructions		listen to or ask for an explanation		have a go and learn by 'trial and error'	
<i>When seeking travel directions I..</i>	look at a map		ask for spoken directions		follow my nose or maybe use a compass	
<i>When cooking a new dish I..</i>	follow a recipe		call a friend for explanation		follow my instinct, tasting as I cook	
<i>To teach someone something I..</i>	write instructions		explain verbally		demonstrate and let them have a go	
<i>I tend to say..</i>	"I see what you mean"		"I hear what you are saying"		"I know how you feel"	
<i>I tend to say..</i>	"show me"		"tell me"		"let me try"	
<i>I tend to say..</i>	"watch how I do it"		"listen to me explain"		"you have a go"	
<i>Complaining about faulty goods I...</i>	write a letter		phone		go back to the store, taking the item with me	
<i>I prefer these leisure activities...</i>	museums or galleries		music or conversation		physical activities or making things	
<i>When shopping I..</i>	look and decide		discuss with shop staff		try on, handle or test	
<i>Choosing a holiday I..</i>	read the brochures		listen to recommendations		imagine the experience	
<i>Choosing a new car I..</i>	read the reviews		discuss with friends		test-drive what you fancy	
<i>Learning a new skill</i>	I watch what the teacher is doing		I talk with the teacher exactly what I should do		I like to give it a try and work it out as I go along by doing it	

<i>Choosing from a restaurant menu, I..</i>	imagine how the food looks		I talk through the choices silently		I imagine what the food will taste like	
<i>When listening to a band....</i>	I sing along to the lyrics (even in my head!)		I listen to the lyrics and the beats		I move in time with the music	
<i>When concentrating I..</i>	focus on the words or pictures in front of me		discuss the problem and possible solutions in my head		move around a lot, fiddle with pens and pencils and touch unrelated things	
<i>I remember things best by..</i>	writing notes or keeping printed details		saying them aloud or repeating words and key points in my head		doing and practising the activity, or imagining it being done	
<i>My first memory is of</i>	looking at something		being spoken to		doing something	
<i>When anxious, I..</i>	visualise the worst-case scenarios		talk over in my head what worries me most		can't sit still, fiddle and move around constantly	
<i>I feel more connected to others because of</i>	how they look		what they say to me		how they make me feel	
<i>When I revise for an exam, I</i>	write lots of revision notes (using colours!)		I talk over my notes, to myself or other people		imagine making the movement or creating the formula	
<i>When explaining something to someone, I..</i>	show them what I mean		explain to them in different ways until they understand		encourage them to try and talk them through the idea as they try	
<i>My main interests are</i>	Photography, films or people-watching		listening to music or the radio or talking to friends		physical/sports activities or fine wines, fine foods or dancing	
<i>Most of my free time is spent..</i>	watching television		talking to friends		doing physical activity or making things	
<u>Totals</u>	Visual		Auditory		Kinesthetic/physical	

Therefore my predominant revision style is:

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VAK Learning Styles

Learning style	Description	Suggested Revision Techniques
Visual	seeing and reading	Look at and/or draw your own pictures and diagrams. Draw mind maps for each main topic. Write bullet points, flip charts and/or flash cards summarising main points. Use highlighters to emphasise points. Watch demonstrations, news bulletins, documentaries or films on the topic Read handouts, articles on the topic.
Auditory	listening and speaking	Read aloud main points to yourself. Tape yourself talking and listen back. Associate noises or sounds to material. Pair up with someone and tell them about the main points you've learnt, or have a group discussion. Create rhymes or spoken story to associate difficult words/dates. Listen to radio/spoken word bulletins about topic.
Kinesthetic	touching and doing	Create large-scale mind maps of topics. Cut and paste material or construct quick models. Act out quotes or scenes for revising arts subjects (English, Drama, History). Get up and stretch every 30 mins and possibly change the way you are seated or revision location. Squeeze a stress ball while you revise. Use fingers to number points to remember.

According to the VAK model, most people possess a dominant or preferred learning style, and using the suggested revision techniques for this learning style can help material be remembered more easily.

However, everyone uses all learning styles to some extent and some people will have a mixed and evenly balanced blend of the three styles. So do look at techniques from all three learning styles in order to help revision!

Example of different learning styles for the same topic: Noble gases

Task: Revise the order of the noble gases for your GCSE science exam, in the order of lightest gas to heaviest gas.

The correct order is: Helium, Neon, Argon, Krypton, Xenon, Radon.

A visual learner could find this way of revising helps:

- Highlighting elements in the order of rainbow colours
- Highlighting the first letter of each element to form an acronym

H	Helium
N	Neon
A	Argon
K	Krypton
X	Xenon
R	Radon

An auditory learner could find this way of revising helps:

- Creating an oral story with the elements in the correct order. Put extra emphasis of your voice on the elements, or say them in a funny accent so that the brain picks up them up more easily.

“**Helium** and **Neon** were best friends with Victoria Beckham. So one day they decided to visit David Beckham at his new football club, at the **Argon** stadium. It was actually pretty boring there, so Victoria suggested moving on to do some clubbing in **Krypton** or **Xenon**, her new favourite clubs. But as they got there, the police swooped in to do a **Radon** it (raid on it). So poor old Posh had to totter off home on her ridiculous high heels.”

A kinaesthetic learner could find this way of revising helps:

- Assigning an element to each of your fingers, and physically counting through them by touch in each of your fingers. Count them more and more quickly, saying the elements names more and more quickly, until your brain automatically remembers the pattern. Eg:

Thumb- Helium

Index finger- Neon

Middle finger- Argon

Ring finger- Krypton

Little finger- Xenon

Thumb on opposite hand: Radon

The following are suggested ideas to discuss with the student:

1. Discuss which techniques have effectively helped the student revise in the past. Note down any that have worked for school mates/mentor that they haven't tried yet.
2. What materials and environment will the student need in order to effectively revise? Consider at home and at school.
3. Are there any mistakes you as a mentor have made in the past with revision, and what went wrong? How did you manage to learn from this experience and change their technique? The more disaster stories the better!

Top 10 Revision Tips to Improve Effectiveness and Reduce Panic!

Preparing to revise successfully

1. Start revision early in the year. Even if you have coursework and other homework during normal school weeks, try to fit in 15 mins to 30 mins on most days to tackle exam topics.
2. Create a revision timetable for all weeks leading up to the exam period so you feel in control and know you have enough time to cover all topics. See handout with example timetable.
3. If you are missing notes from class, make sure you copy the information from another student or teacher promptly before you forget, and then panic last-minute.
4. What are the main factors that distract you from revising? Eliminate them from your life. Turn off your radio from the mains, keep a bottle of water by your desk or make sure that MSN is offline... whatever distracts you needs to be tackled and removed.

Revision techniques for success

5. Do not get exhausted from concentrating too long; you will not be able to remember the material. Plan regular breaks and other commitments like seeing family or playing sport. Ensure you eat regularly and healthily, and sleep regular hours.
6. After revising a certain topic, always have a quick 5-mins review of this topic again a couple days later in order to make sure the main points have stuck in your memory. This helps transfer points from your short-term memory to your long-term memory.
7. Summarising notes can be helpful, as changing the format of the material helps commit information to memory.
8. Practise, practise, and practise some more with as many sample papers you can get your hands on. Get used to timing your sample papers and the format of the exam so it doesn't come as a shock during the real one.
9. Use your friends and family as much as possible. Create mini-quizzes for your family to test you, and for topics which require ideas and debate (eg, interpreting a poem) you can plan group discussions with your friends.

10. Remember it is never too late!!!!!! Always go and see your teachers for an explanation for material you don't understand even if it is close to the exam.

Creating a revision timetable with the student

Consider:

- Creating two types: one for evenings after school, one for whole days during holidays, weekends and exam leave.
- How long should each revision period and break last?
- How is the student going to divide subjects and individual topics over the revision period? Will they concentrate on one subject per day, or move between different subjects during each day?
- How will they mix up types of revision? Eg, combining reviewing materials with practice papers.

Useful revision websites:

<http://www.revisionworld.co.uk/exam-tips-and-advice>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/>

<http://www.s-cool.co.uk/gcse.html>