

Ysgol Uwchradd

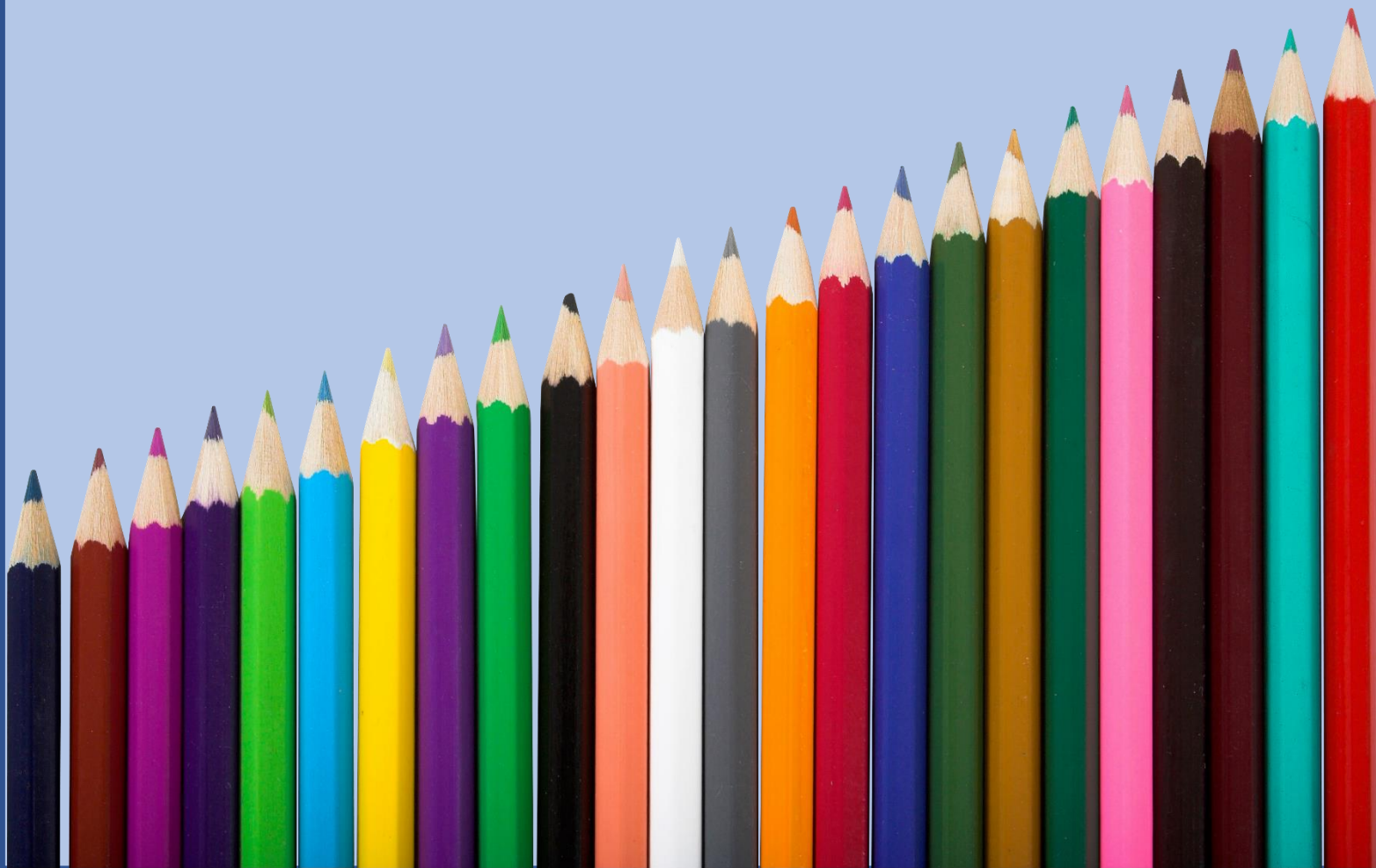
**Llanishen**

High School



# LEARNING TO LEARN

*A Year 11 Parent's Guide*



# Introduction

Your child's GCSEs are incredibly important, having a big impact on their future plans and life choices. We all know that revising is tough, and can be particularly daunting when first setting out.

Everyone at Llanishen High School wants our young people to be successful and proud of what they achieve in the summer and beyond. In order to do this we've put together a programme of support during form times called 'Learning to Learn'. These sessions have been designed to help our Year 11s:

- become independent and resilient learners
- understand how they best revise
- have lots of hints and tips to take away and try at home
- reinforce the hard work they are already doing in their lessons
- get into healthy work routines
- manage their anxiety and look after their mental health

This Year 11 Parent's Guide gives you a feel for the Learning to Learn programme, and includes some of the main highlights. We've also compiled subject specific revision strategies and links to effective revision guides that we feel our students may find useful. This guide is best read together with your child, as having a dialogue about how they are feeling about their revision is often the first step.

If you have any questions after reading this guide please get in contact with myself, your child's subject teacher or their form tutor.

Mr M Grimstead

Lead Practitioner for Learning to Learn

Ysgol Uwchradd

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# Getting Started

This is often a hardest part! **Having discussions** is a really useful way to get started, to open up a dialogue and start to formulate a plan of action:

- What's your motivation? Why do you want to do well?
- What grades would you be happy with in the summer? Be aspirational but realistic.
- Do you need a particular set of grades for your future plans?
- What subjects are you enjoying? What subjects do you find hard?

As a parent the key is being interested, supportive and encouraging.

Then it's all about **getting organised**:

- A tidy room/workspace is always better for study and revision!
- Organising notes, books and folders is often a good way to build momentum and to think about what study needs to be done
- Make sure you have any revision equipment you might need - highlighters, blank revision cards, lined paper, different colour pens – this might seem a small thing but might just be the reason your child gets started.
- Once it is published make sure that the exam timetable and your child's revision timetable is displayed so they know what is coming up (and can tick them off as they go!)

**Creating a revision timetable** is also a good way of getting started. It makes you accountable as you have to stick to your plans, it helps to build momentum and keeps students motivated, all of which reduces stress and anxiety:

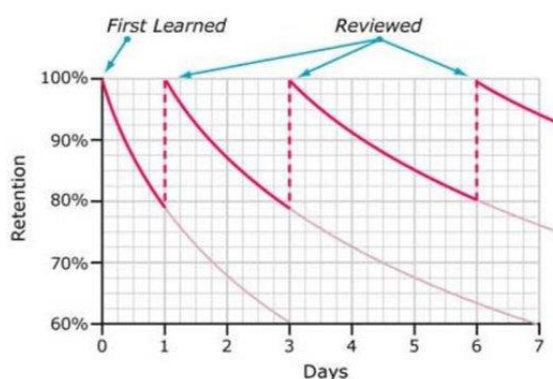
- **Little and often** is the key – revising in short bursts is much more effective than staring at a revision guide for hours and hours – 20-30 minutes on a topic is optimum.
- Building in time for exercise, breaks, getting fresh air, continuing hobbies and seeing friends is all really important. Balance is crucial, and **everyone needs some downtime**.
- Make sure you **mix up** the different subjects and topics – don't put all the difficult ones together
- Don't expect to go from 0 to 100 – start with small revision sessions (try 15 minutes a day, after homework), and then build up. **Getting into a good revision routine** is the most important thing at the start, not the length.
- Why not create the timetable online? Try [www.getrevising.co.uk](http://www.getrevising.co.uk) or [www.goconqr.com](http://www.goconqr.com)

# Active Revision

When we think of revision, we often think of sitting down and spending long hours reading through textbooks until our eyelids shut. This style of passive revision is obviously better than doing nothing at all, however, scientists has proven that there are a few different methods which are more effective in 'making it stick', being more time efficient and better for our motivation.

## Spaced Retrieval Practice

When we are presented with new information our brains are not designed to remember all of it (so it is absolutely ok that we often forget things!). The theory of Spaced Retrieval Practice shows that by **revisiting topics several days and weeks after being taught**, it helps us to retain it in our long term memory. Every time you revisit a set of facts, even if you get it wrong first time, you are coding it deeper into your long term memory.



By testing your child, or asking them questions from their notes/revision guide you are helping them to understand the gaps in their knowledge and builds their confidence by seeing the improvements...you do not need to be an expert or know more than your child – have the answers in front of you!

## Interleaving

When we revise we often look at things in the same order and learn things in the same style. This is good, but not optimal (which is what we want!). **Mixing up the order** of topics you revisit (known as interleaving) improves knowledge retention because you are having to combine different styles of learning and having to make connections to other areas of the course.

We can make sure we are using interleaving by **creating variety of subjects and topics** in our revision timetable, and that when we are doing quizzes/tests/activities we don't always start at page 1 of the topic. This works perfectly with our recommendation of revising subjects little and often.



## Note Taking

This is a popular way of revising, and can be really effective if used in conjunction with the previous methods. It's also a nice way of easing into revision – creative and organised students like doing this as it involves lots of coloured stationary!

- Choose a subject/topic
- Organise all of your current notes for that subject into the right units/topics, making sure you copy up any missed notes
- Copy up any important notes from the revision guide or other materials
- Read through the notes and highlight or underline the key words/phrases
- Write out the highlighted words/phrases onto a set of revision cards, condensing the topic into the most important things to remember
- Each topic should have a small number of revision cards
- Use the revision cards to periodically revisit topics (spaced retrieval practice)



## Flash Cards

On a similar theme to above, students create flash cards based on their note taking, with a key word on the front and a definition on the back. This is perfect for **self/parent quizzing** and great for interleaving as you can keep shuffling up the deck of flash cards!

## Deliberate Practice

We can be extremely effective if we focus our attention on a particular skill, knowledge area or topic. As the name suggests, if we are being **deliberate and purposeful with our study** we can see big improvements, especially in areas that we struggle in. However, this is particularly tough as usually we have less motivation to do the things we find hard! The key to deliberate practice is:

- Identifying a specific area for improvement i.e. algebra
- Asking the expert (teacher, parent, online videos, textbooks) for a model
- Spending focused time of that area, using the teacher model
- Going beyond comfort zone by answering progressively harder questions
- Getting feedback and support from the expert (teacher, parent)



# Online Revision

There are now lots of excellent websites and apps which offer online learning tools for students to access on a device. A few highlights are shown below:

- **Brainscape** – self testing website based on flash cards. Students are also able to create their own flashcards and search from a range of existing exam specific cards  
<https://www.brainscape.com/>
- **Quizlet** – flash cards, topic explanations and quizzes. Uses interleaving to aid the revision process <https://quizlet.com/en-gb>
- **Seneca** – for students (and parents too). Lots of explanations, end of topic tests, helps you to identify areas of strength/weakness and revisits tests accordingly  
<https://senecalearning.com/en-GB/>
- **GoConqr** – online timetable, mindmaps, knowledge organisers, flashcards and quizzes  
<https://www.goconqr.com/>
- **BBC Bitesize** – great all round revision resource, with lots of subject (and exam board) specific notes, videos, tests and links to other resources <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>



It is also really useful to visit the **WJEC website** (<https://www.wjec.co.uk/>) to:

- download subject specifications and topic lists (so that you can Red/Amber/Green the topics and identify which areas need the most work – great for deliberate practice)
- have a go at past papers (using the mark schemes to learn from mistakes)
- **PLEASE NOTE: some subjects have had syllabus changes for the summer 2022 exam series, which means specifications and past papers may be different from what students need to know for this year. You can check these changes on the WJEC website or ask your child's subject teacher if you are unsure.**

There are many more online resources, however, as mentioned in page 4 you become ineffective if you just stare at information and endlessly read through online notes. The best websites and apps will support students in active revision, getting them to engage in activities...and mixing this style up with 'paper' revision is even better!

# Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing

Key Stage 4 can be extremely difficult to navigate in terms of social, personal and educational development. Students are becoming more independent and have many external pressures. They are experiencing the anxiety and stress of sitting exams and completing assessments whilst worrying about future plans. What is crucial is that academic success isn't allowed to overshadow your child's emotional wellbeing – so, as a parent, keeping a level head, having an open dialogue with your child, and having supportive and reasonable expectations is invaluable.

Being a good listener is important - asking questions about how your child is feeling, taking an interest in their revision and specific subjects, and sharing in their progress. It's also very powerful to share your own struggles with learning, it makes us relatable shows that we are human after all!

Maintaining positive wellbeing during exams also includes having healthy routines. Like a top athlete would prepare thoroughly before their competition, the importance of sleep, reducing the amount of screen/phone time and eating well cannot be understated. These are often not easy conversations to be having with your child, but definitely one which will be of benefit to them. The best athletes will also use visualisation to picture what the competition (exam) will look like and picture themselves being successful at the end; this is a great way of calming pre-exam nerves.

There are a number of effective websites/apps that support young people in reflecting on their mental health and offer guidance on a range of wellbeing topics:

- Young Minds - <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>
- MindEd - <https://www.minded.org.uk/>
- Headspace - <https://www.headspace.com/> (subscription service)

Different students react to stress in different ways, so it's important to keep an eye on any changes and to keep talking. You can always speak to the Wellbeing Team or child's form tutor if you have any concerns.



# DEALING WITH EXAM STRESS

If stress affects you, try to find ways to maintain a positive attitude and cultivate a positive approach during your revision.



## KEEP FIT

by taking some exercise you enjoy



## RELAX

perhaps by sitting quietly or meditating



## EAT WELL

but healthily



## PLANNED TIME AWAY

take some planned time away from study, rather than avoiding revision



## RECOGNISE ACHIEVEMENTS

be pleased with your achievements as you revise

## REWARD YOURSELF

reward yourself with an occasional treat



## SLEEP

get sufficient sleep





# Subject Specific Support

## English Literature

You are either studying 'An Inspector Calls' by J.B. Priestley and 'Heroes' by Robert Cormier  
or

'Lord of the Flies' by William Golding and 'Blood Brothers' by Willy Russell.

It would be worthwhile for you to purchase your own copies of both texts to allow you to re-read at home and annotate your own points of analysis.

### Top Tips for Independent Revision....

- Re read. Re read. Re read. You need to have a confident understanding of who is who and what happens in both texts.
- Make mindmaps for each main character and each theme of the texts. Use textual evidence in your mindmaps to support your points.
- Make mindmaps for the context of 'An Inspector Calls' or 'Lord of the Flies'. Consider how each contextual point is relevant to your study of the play.
- Plan and write as many essay responses as possible! Your teacher can provide you with a list of previous essay questions.

### Useful Websites....

#### An Inspector Calls

- BBC Bitesize - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zpr639q>
- Spark Notes - <https://www.sparknotes.com/drama/an-inspector-calls/>
- Lit Charts - <https://www.litcharts.com/lit/an-inspector-calls/summary>
- Twitter - @Aninspectortho2 · YouTube- Mr Bruff-  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/mrbruff/playlists>

#### Heroes

- BBC Bitesize - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zq4qdmn/revision/1>
- Lit Charts - <https://www.litcharts.com/lit/heroes/summary>

## Lord of the Flies

- BBC Bitesize - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zwt9mnb>
- Shmoop - <https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/lord-of-the-flies>
- Spark Notes - <https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/flies/>
- YouTube - Mr Bruff - <https://www.youtube.com/user/mrbruff/playlists>

## Blood Brothers

- BBC Bitesize - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zxv7sg8>
- Lit Charts - <https://www.litcharts.com/lit/blood-brothers>

## Useful Study Guides...

The content of these are useful but be reminded that we are studying for the WJEC exam so ignore references to other exam boards and their assessment objectives/ exams.



## Mathematics

In Maths we use HegartyMaths (<https://hegartymaths.com/>) to set Homework throughout all school years, but it is also an excellent revision tool for Year 11. There are videos on each topic and questions that give immediate feedback to students (and to your class teacher) that can be re-attempted numerous times with slightly different questions/numbers.

Students also became accustomed to MathsDIY (<https://www.mathsdiy.com/>) in the summer in the lead up to the exams. This website provides all past exam papers, along with the mark scheme and worked solutions. There are also booklets on a large number of topics on there (with solutions available too).

## **Biology**

In Biology we have two free revision guides, the 'Bangor' guides, which are available through Teams. There are also a number of other excellent resources:

- WJEC knowledge organisers <https://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rId=3072>
- Tanio Cymru Revision PowerPoints <http://www.tanio.cymru/pwnc.html?lang=en&mode=pupil&subject=bi>
- WJEC Question bank - Create your own revision papers <https://questionbank.wjec.co.uk/question-bank/question-search.html>
- adolygu Revison <https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/adolygu-2-revision-2/id1082380213>
- Double Award Science Year 10 and 11 revision guide <https://www.amazon.co.uk/My-Revision-Notes-Science-Double/dp/1471883590>
- Triple Award Biology Year 10 and 11 revision guide <https://www.amazon.co.uk/My-Revision-Notes-WJEC-Biology/dp/1471883507/>
- BBC Bitesize <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/examspecs/zsw7frd>
- WJEC specific YouTube videos [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqbOeHaAUXw9II7sBVG3\\_bw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqbOeHaAUXw9II7sBVG3_bw)
- Educake (pupils should already have login and passwords) <https://www.educake.co.uk/my-educake>

## **Chemistry**

There are two 'Bangor' revision guides, which will be made available to students on their Teams pages, in addition to:

- All students have access to [www.educake.co.uk](http://www.educake.co.uk) where they have been issued a login. If they have forgotten their login, they can ask their science teacher for a reminder.
- Students would also benefit from downloading the adolygu app: <https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/adolygu-2-revision-2/id1082380213>
- The BBC bitesize website is also very helpful for Chemistry: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/examspecs/z6pvkmm>
- Excellent WJEC knowledge organisers (<https://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rId=3690>)

## **Physics**

In a similar vein to the rest of the Sciences, there are two 'Bangor' guides for Physics which are free and available to students on Teams, as well as:

- WJEC knowledge organisers:
  - P1 - <https://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rId=3331>
  - P2 - <https://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rId=3332>
- Tanio Cymru Revision  
PowerPoints <http://www.tanio.cymru/pwnc.html?lang=en&mode=pupil&subject=ph>
- Walking/talking exam  
<https://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rId=3639>
- WJEC Question bank for past papers and mark schemes [https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/question-bank/#tab\\_0](https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/question-bank/#tab_0)
- Adolygu Revision app <https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/adolygu-2-revision-2/id108238021>
- BBC Bitesize <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/examspecs/z83k6fr>

## **Business Studies**

For GCSE Business Studies, students are given lots of in-house revision materials throughout Key Stage 4, so going back through your folders and using these will be invaluable to your revision.

BBC Bitesize is also a great revision tool for Business Studies

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/subjects/zpsvr82>

## **Geography**

There are two excellent books that students can get for Geography:

- Revision Guide <https://www.amazon.co.uk/My-Revision-Notes-WJEC-Geography/dp/1471887405/>
- Student Guide <https://www.amazon.co.uk/WJEC-GCSE-Geography-Workbook-Andy/dp/1510453512/>

In terms of online resources:

- [BBC Bitesize](#) - good all round revision tool
- [Geography WJEC flashcards and study sets | Quizlet](#) - good for revising key terms and concepts
- [Seneca Learning - \(Only has theme 1,2,3 and 5\)](#) - great for testing yourself
- [Past papers can be found here](#)

Lunchtime and after school revision sessions will also start in January! The following Geography revision guide is very useful....



Three common revision techniques that are least effective in helping you revise are:

- Highlighting texts
- Re-reading texts
- Summarising texts



These methods may make you feel like you are revising, but there are better methods to help you retain the information. Follow the globe round to find out more.

### Flash cards

Simply create with questions on one side and answers on the other. You can colour code them for different topics and quiz yourself or others.

How to use in geography:



**Key words**  
Create for key words and terms

**Case studies/examples**  
Create for the causes, effects and responses of case studies and example events

**Formations and processes**  
Create for showing the stages of geographical formations and processes

**Evaluation**  
Create for giving the advantages and disadvantages of management techniques



### Dual coding

Dual coding is the method of putting your knowledge into visual form along side words.

1. Look at your notes and visuals, compare these to the words
2. Look at visuals and explain in your own words what they mean
3. Take information you are trying to learn and draw visuals to go with it

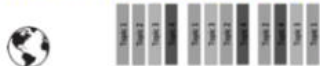
How to use in geography:

Create a comic strip to show the impacts of Haiti, 2010

### Interleaving

Rather than revising all your topics in one go (cramming) you should revise chunks of a topic for small amounts of time (15 minutes) and then move onto another chunk from a different topic.

How to use in geography:



Practice exam from past topics questions mixed in with more recent ones.

**Knowledge organisers**  
Use these to create 'must know quizzes'

**Processes**  
'Explain the formation of...'

**Spaced**  
Test on old and new

**Case studies/examples**  
To identify the main features of case studies and examples

### Retrieval practice

Testing what you know is a powerful tool in revision; the effort to remember something really strengthens your memory.

Apps such as Memrise and Quizlet allow you to create your own or use quizzes based on topics. create them, test yourself or get someone to test you! It

### Transform it

Graphic organisers are a great way of transforming your notes/information into visual revision topics.

They can be used to create links, show a narrative, identify the causes/consequences and importance of something.

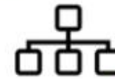
How to use in geography:



**Concept mapping**  
At the end of the week mind map all you can remember about a topic and link areas together. Then use your notes to further add to your mind map.

**Case studies/examples**  
create a venn diagram to compare two tectonic case studies.

**Processes**  
create a visual flow diagram to show the formation of geographical landforms.



**Cue column**  
-Key words  
-Key question



**Summary**  
-Summary of your notes in your own words

### The Cornell method

This method is a great way to get you to 'think' about your revision.

Split your revision book page into three sections; note taking, cues and summary.

### The Big picture

The best way to aid your understanding of geography is to make sure you are confident with the big overview of each topic and the connections between topics.

How to use in geography:

create a mind map to show the links between each topic

write down everything you know about a topic before you revise it

### Deliberate practice

Set time aside to practice improving your knowledge or geographical skills. Choose what you need to do; it must be tough enough to challenge you and practice, practice, practice! You should focus on something you are almost able to do but not just yet!

How to use in geography

Use a model answer from your teacher, pull it apart and identify the key parts. Then answer a similar question and try to replicate.

Study material, complete practice questions in timed conditions. Then use your note to correct/improve your answer. A week later redo a similar question. Repeat as necessary.



How do we revise for geography?  
Which methods are most effective?



## History

There is no single revision book that contains all the options in our GCSE History course. We will issue students with what is available to assist revision, both published resources and our own materials.

However, there are a few useful websites to help with the different units:

- BBC Bitesize on Crime and Punishment since 1500  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zpp3srd>
- BBC Bitesize on Depression, War and Recovery in Britain 1930-51  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/z3bkrwx>  
**(Please note that South Africa 1948-94 will not be examined in 2022).**
- You are also likely to find a wealth of useful material on YouTube.

We recommend attempting the issued fact tests and quizzes, and having a friend or parent help test your knowledge. Practice lots of exam questions, both with resources and without, and with time limits and without. Write out difficult to remember information several times to help it stick. Attending revision sessions run by your teachers is useful but no substitute for independent revision and study in your own time.

## ICT

There is a past paper section in the ICT teams page. Students will also receive a past paper pack once we work through a few more topics and ready for the mocks. We have assignments and quick quizzes for each unit.

There is also a LHS ICT channel on Youtube, where there is support with coursework, and over the next few months there will be questions analysed, past papers walk throughs and lots of helpful tips for ICT revision.

It may be helpful for students to subscribe, if they take ICT / Digital Technology -

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxH-j5W8MxiVfFhkiU5c3XQ/playlists>

A good revision book for ICT - <https://www.amazon.co.uk/My-Revision-Notes-WJEC-GCSE/dp/1510454942>

## **Music**

There are two really useful guides which accompany the GCSE course:

- WJEC GCSE Music Revision Guide: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/WJEC-Eduqas-Music-Revision-Guide/dp/1911208411/>
- WJEC GCSE Music Study Guide: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Rhinegold-Education-Eduqas-Music-Revision/dp/1785582151/>

Other effective revision websites for Music:

- BBC Bitesize – Great for general Music revision (including harmony, melody and elements of music) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/subjects/zpf3cdm>
- WJEC Set work knowledge organisers - <https://resources.wjec.co.uk/pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rlid=3361>
- Dallas Symphony Orchestra - Great for developing your ability to identify different instruments/sounds - <https://www.dallassymphony.org/community-education/dso-kids/listen-watch/instruments/>
- Teoria – Help with dictation, builds from easy to extremely difficult! - <https://www.teoria.com/en/exercises/md.php>

## **Product Design, Engineering Design, and Fashion and Textiles**

Website links are all shared through the student Teams pages, including

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/WJEC-GCSE-Design-Technology-Fawcett/dp/1510451358>

## **Religion, Philosophy and Ethics**

There are revision guides available for Unit 1: Religion and Philosophical Themes and Unit 2: Religion and Ethical Themes. Both units focus on Christianity and Islam.

- Unit 1: <https://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/subjects/religious-education-philosophy/products/14-16/my-revision-notes-wjec-gcse-religious-studies-uni>
- Unit 2: [https://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/subjects/religious-education-philosophy/products/14-16/my-revision-notes-wjec-gcse-religious-studies-\(1\)](https://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/subjects/religious-education-philosophy/products/14-16/my-revision-notes-wjec-gcse-religious-studies-(1))

You can access Christianity and Islam revision for Unit 1 and Unit 2 from BBC Bitesize - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/examspecs/z3xvfcw>

We have sample assessment papers in the department so students can complete practice questions in preparation for their exam. They can be picked up from room 42. Students should use the question structure to understand how to answer the different types of questions (part a, b, c and d).

A top tip would be to revise quotes and include these references in their answers. This will secure the best marks.

## **Welsh**

Great revision books for Welsh GCSE:

- BBC Bitesize GCSE Cymraeg Ail Iaith
- Collins Revision WJEC Welsh Second Language (black book)
- Collins WJEC GCSE Revision Welsh Second Language (white book)
- WJEC Welsh Second Language Revision Guide Illuminate Publishing