



**Plymstock School**  
Achieving Excellence through Curriculum and Culture

# Exam Preparation and Revision Guide 2023/2024

Includes:

GSCCE Mindset

Wellbeing – staying well during revision and exams

Revision techniques and tips

Revision resources and revision support

Calendar and key dates

Exam preparation



**BE  
KIND**



**WORK  
HARD**



**AIM  
HIGH**

# GCSE Mindset



The GCSE mindset helps guide you to realise what you are capable of and ensures that you achieve. These elements are key to a good GCSE mindset

<b>Effort and hard work</b>	Without effort, achievement is almost impossible. Effort refers to how much hard work you do and the harder you work the more successful you are likely to be.
<b>Organisation</b>	Organising your learning will help it to make sense. Organising your time so that you complete tasks in a timely fashion will also make sure that you spend enough time on each subject and topic so that you cover all the content. Organising your notes, flashcards and mind maps will help you monitor and practice your revision.
<b>Consistency</b>	Little and often beats last minute cramming and prevents you from burning out. Revising and revisiting knowledge and ideas will also help you retain information for longer.
<b>Practise</b>	Practice is different from effort, it represents what you do with the time you put into your revision. It is not 'how much' you revise but the 'how'.
<b>Attitude</b>	There are four elements to attitude: confidence, academic buoyancy, emotional control and growth mindset.

Reference; The GCSE Mindset, S. Oakes and M. Griffin 2018



# Wellbeing



We asked young people to give us some wellbeing advice for exam time and this is what they told us:

1. Always take a moment just to breathe, whether in the exam, before or after
2. Remember that school does offer support, just reach out and ask!
3. Keep your work balanced. Spend time revising but socialise and relax too
4. Keep a self-care routine so that your revision is the most productive it can be whilst you feel as good as possible
5. Break up revision with food and exercise to make sure you stay energised
6. Remember that results do not define you
7. Find a revision space and style that works for you
8. Work to your own pace – everyone is different in how they work
9. If you feel nervous about the time pressure of an exam, practice timing yourself when you revise, or try some test papers
10. Plan in some treats to reward yourself, and celebrate when it's all over!

## Exam support and mental health support

- The Mix - [www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)
- BBC Bitesize: The Mind Set - [www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z3hpgdm](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z3hpgdm)
- Student Minds - [www.studentminds.org.uk](http://www.studentminds.org.uk)
- MindEd (Parents and Students) - [www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk)



## Key dates

13-30 November – Mock series 1

14 December – Mock results day

11 January – Parents' evening

8-22 January - Written exams

22-26 January - Language speaking exams

20 February-1 March - Mock series 2

7 May-26 June - Written exams

6, 13 and 26 June - Contingency exam days

22 August - GCSE results day



## Mock exam period: Monday 13 November to Thursday 30 November 2023

Day & date	Session 1	Session 2
B Monday 13 November	<b>Geography Paper 1: Physical Geography</b> (1h 30m, 1h 53m ET)	<b>History Paper: British depth study Option B4 Early Elizabethan England</b> (1h 40m, 2hr 5m ET)
B Tuesday 14 November	<b>English Language Paper 2</b> (1h 45m, 2h 11m ET)	<b>Drama</b> (1h 30m, 1h 53m ET) <b>Computer Science P1</b> (45m, 56m)
B Wednesday 15 November	<b>Mathematics Paper 1: Non-calculator</b> (1h 30m, 1h 53m ET)	<b>D&amp;T</b> (2h, 2h 30m ET) <b>RS</b> (2h, 2h 30m ET)
B Thursday 16 November	<b>Science Paper 1: Biology</b> (1h 15m, 1h 34m ET) <b>Triple Science 1: Biology</b> (1h 45m, 2h 11m ET)	<b>French, German, Spanish Writing</b> Foundation (1h 10m, 1h 28m ET) Higher (1h 20m, 1h 40m ET)
B Friday 17 November	<b>Mathematics Paper 2: Calculator</b> (1h 30m, 1h 53m ET)	<b>Business P1</b> (1h 30m, 1h 53m ET)
A Monday 20 November	<b>English Literature Paper 2</b> (2h 15m, 2h 49m ET)	<b>PE</b> (1h 30m, 1h 53m ET)
A Tuesday 21 November	<b>Science Paper 2: Chemistry</b> (1h 15m, 1h 34m ET) <b>Triple Science 2: Chemistry</b> (1h 45m, 2h 11m ET)	<b>Construction</b> (1h 30m, 1h 53m ET) <b>Hospitality</b> (1h 30m, 1h 53m ET) <b>Enterprise</b> (1h 15m, 1h 34m ET) <b>Health &amp; Social Care</b> (1h, 1h 15m ET)
A Wednesday 22 November	<b>MFL French &amp; German: Listening</b> F 35m, H 45m (ET F 44m, H 56m) followed by <b>Reading</b> F 45m, H 1h (ET F 56m, H 1h 15m)	<b>Computer Science P2</b> (1h 30m, 1h 53m ET)
A Thursday 23 November	<b>Science Paper 3: Physics</b> (1h 15m, 1h 34m ET) <b>Triple Science 3: Physics</b> (1h 45m, 2h 11m ET)	<b>Food</b> (1h 45m, 2h 11m ET)
A Friday 24 November	<b>Mathematics Paper 3: Calculator</b> (1h 30m, 1h 53m ET)	<b>Business P2</b> (1h, 1h 15m ET)
B Monday 27 November	<b>Art</b> (5h)	
B Tuesday 28 November	<b>Art</b> (5h)	
B Thursday 30 November	<b>Photography</b> (5h)	



# Revision techniques

The self-testing toolkit has been developed by the Education Endowment Fund, to help students learn key facts and concepts. We have practised these techniques with students in school to help support them in their revision. This guide summarises the key techniques to remind students of some of the best ways to revise. However, everyone has different ways of working and using a range of revision techniques helps to stay focused and engaged with the work. Therefore, here is a summary of other techniques that students might find useful.

Revision technique	How to do it
Knowledge organisers	Use the knowledge organisers, which contains all of the key concepts that you need to know and apply the Look, Cover, Write, Check principle. A video explaining this can be found on the school website. Knowledge organisers can be found on the school website too
Quizzes	Play blooket or kahoot with friends
Seneca	Use Seneca learning to revise and quiz yourself
BBC bitesize	Make notes and complete the online revision quizzes on BBC Bitesize
Practise papers	Use the website links in the resources section to download practise papers. Complete the paper in timed conditions to the best of your ability and then use a different colour pen to go over the paper with the support of revision notes or a text book
Talk ideas through	Use your notes, flashcards and mind maps to talk through your understanding with a friend or family member
Use pictures and diagrams	Try to dual code your ideas by using diagrams and pictures to summarise your ideas
Note Taking	Read a section of work and then copy notes into a book. Give the work a clear heading and use subheadings to organise your notes
Summarising	Practise copying out notes but as you do this try to summarise the key points into bullet points. Chunk the information into smaller points that make them easier to recall and remember
Highlighting	Use highlighters to identify the key concepts and key words. Rewrite these key points in your own words
Focus on key words	Make glossaries of key words and then write the definitions to these words

## What we share with students:

- Get organised – get the ‘stuff’ you need including decent revision materials
- Start revising early
- Make a realistic revision timetable
- Make sure you’ve got everything you need available
- Go to all your lessons and all available revision sessions (remember just attending revision sessions is not enough!)
- Know how to revise – what methods work for you?
- Have a clear goal for every revision session
- Have a routine
- Take a break if you are getting frustrated
- Don’t waste time struggling – make a note of it – carry on with something else – check it in your next lesson
- Don’t be influenced by what your friends are saying – they are invariably talking rubbish!



## WHY SHOULD I DO CUMULATIVE QUIZZING?



### Is it useful to build-up a quiz over a longer period of time?

**Yes.** Gradually adding questions to a quiz will help you in two ways. Firstly, by testing yourself from the start of the quiz each time, you will force yourself to go back over old learning just before you forget it. Secondly, by answering the same questions every few days you will get quicker at recognising the knowledge and skills needed to answer them.



### Isn't it pointless to keep answering questions I already know the answer to?

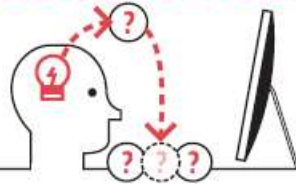
**No.** Scientists studying the brain have shown that spacing out the time between testing yourself will help you to recall the knowledge and practice the skills needed to answer questions. By gradually adding questions to quizzes over longer periods, you will let just the right amount of time pass between answering them. Because we are always gradually forgetting, the more often we remind ourselves the easier it becomes to remember. Eventually, it will be like riding a bike or speaking a language...no one will need to remind you or show you how to do it because you will be able to do it without a second thought.



## HOW SHOULD I DO CUMULATIVE QUIZZING?

Study a topic and add a question or two to your quiz based on what you have learned.

1



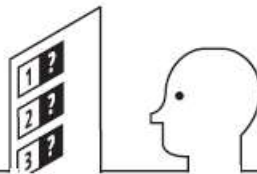
Write down the answer somewhere hidden e.g. on the back of the page.

2



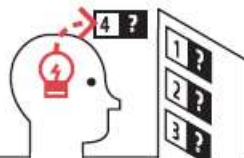
The next time you are about to study, take out your cumulative quiz and test yourself on all of the questions you have written previously.

3



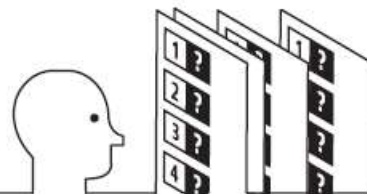
Add a question each time you finish studying the next section of a topic.

4



Answer all of the questions that are building up each and every time, before you study fresh material. The list will get longer, but answering the questions will get easier.

5



BE  
KIND



WORK  
HARD



AIM  
HIGH

## WHY SHOULD I USE FLASHCARDS?



### Is it useful to test myself using flashcards?

**Yes.** By breaking up a topic into smaller amounts of information, testing yourself will be more manageable. Furthermore, by putting a question or key idea on one side of the card and trying to remember the answer or explanation on the back, you will strengthen your memory of the things you're trying to learn.

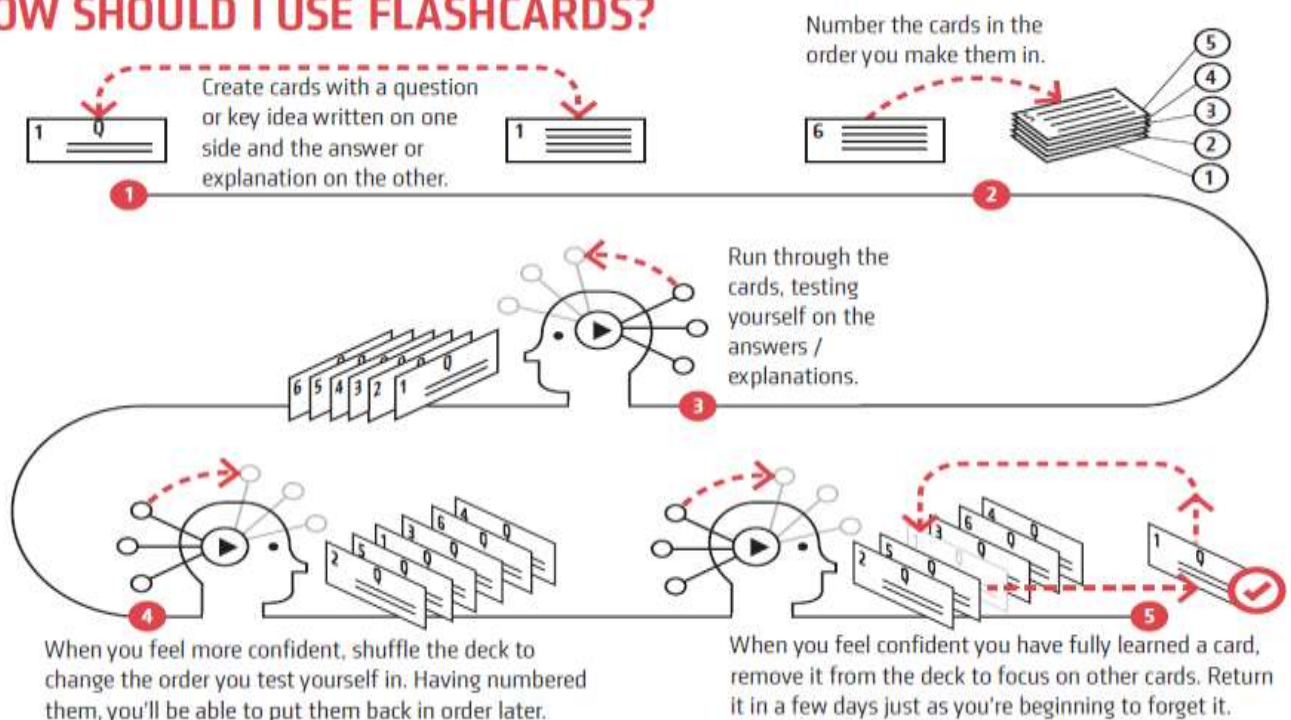


### Why not just read the information? Isn't it pointless to make things harder for myself?

**No.** Scientists studying the brain have shown that when it comes to remembering, a healthy amount of struggle is good for us. Digging deep trying to remember answers or explanations, especially when this feels a little challenging, will increase your chance of remembering it. What's more, by changing the order in which you attempt the cards, you make your brain work in a tougher but more flexible way. This will help you to recognise more quickly how best to answer questions in a test. By taking revision cards out of the stack when you have proven to yourself they've been learnt, you will leave yourself with the cards you find most difficult. This will allow you to focus on what you still need to learn. But remember, it's important to add the learnt cards back into the stack from time to time to refresh your memory.



## HOW SHOULD I USE FLASHCARDS?



**BE  
KIND**



**WORK  
HARD**



**AIM  
HIGH**

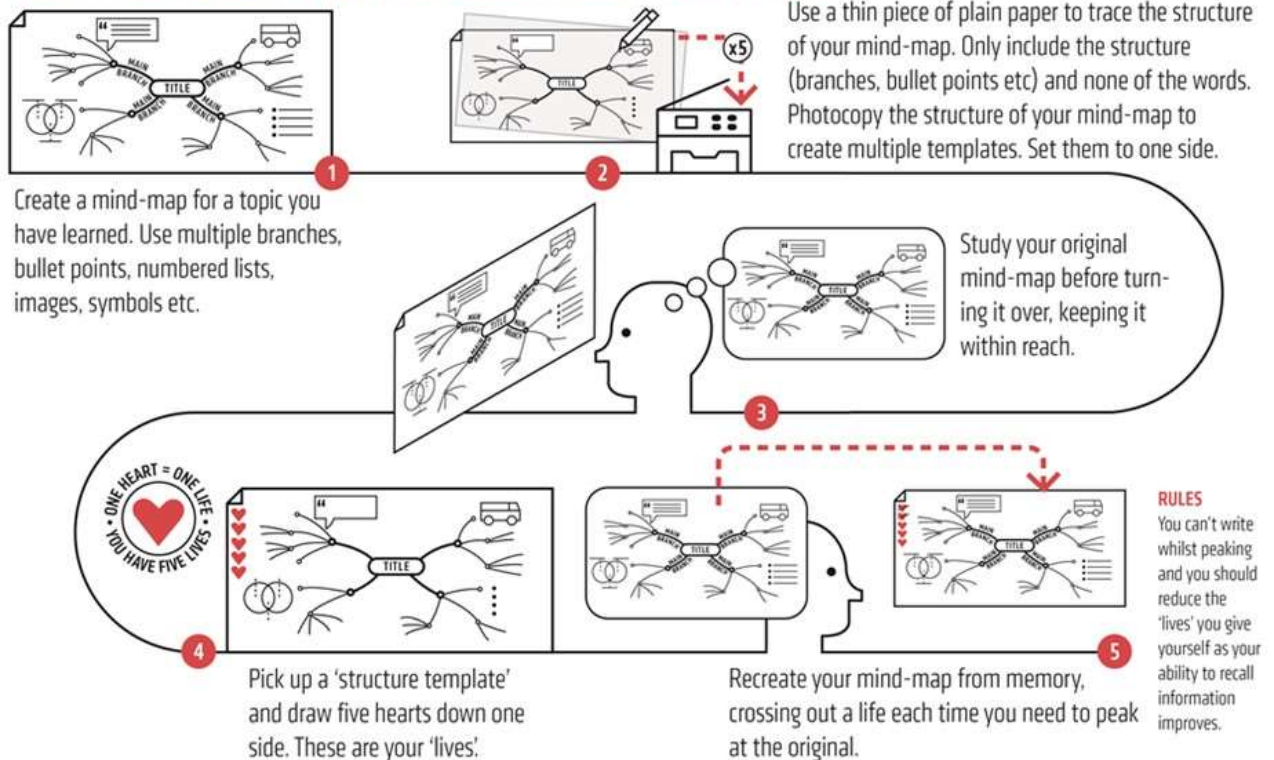


## The self-testing toolkit – Blind Mind Mapping

### Why should I use Blind mind mapping?

This technique involves organising your thoughts into a mind map and when you have finished, which may take a few attempts as you reorder it to make more sense, tracing parts of it, folding up the original mind map and then trying to complete the second from memory. This is useful to help lock in information into your long-term memory so that you can retrieve it in the exam to help you answer questions and solve problems.

### HOW SHOULD I USE BLIND MIND MAPPING?



BE  
KIND



WORK  
HARD



AIM  
HIGH

# Revision tips

## 1. Start revising early

i.e. **months**, not days before the exam.

## 2. Plan your revision using a timetable

Planning out your revision means you can spend more time revising and less time worrying you've forgotten something.

## 3. Don't spend ages making your notes look pretty

This is just wasting time. For diagrams, include all the details you need to learn, but don't try to produce a work of art.

## 4. Set up a nice, tidy study space

You'll need somewhere with good lighting, your pens close by, your phone out of sight and your TV unplugged. Try not to revise on your bed, or you'll be dreaming of pink igloos and elephants before you know it.

## 5. Vary your revision with different activities

Try a variety of different revision techniques — answering practice questions, writing down notes from memory, and using [Revision Guides](#), [Flash Cards](#), [Exam Practice Workbooks](#)

## 6. Do lots of practice papers and questions

You'll find it far easier to answer questions in the exam if you've tried similar ones at home beforehand.

## 7. Set aside time to do fun things — don't turn into a revision zombie

Don't totally stop yourself from having fun. This'll help you stay motivated, relax, and allow you to keep up with your favourite hobbies.

## 8. Keep your phone and other distractions away.

Phones are great, but they're a one-stop shop for procrastination. Heed our warnings and stick it in a drawer while you're revising.

## 9. Don't just read your notes

You have to **WRITE STUFF DOWN**. This is really basic "how to revise" stuff.

## 10. Sleep and eat properly

Sleep is more important than you'd imagine — it helps your brain store all the juicy information you've learned throughout the day. Drinking plenty of water and eating healthy foods will also boost your concentration throughout the day.

## 11. On exam day, make sure you arrive in plenty of time

Nothing adds extra pressure to exam day like the fear of being late. Just make sure you set off at a little earlier than usual. While you wait, if people around you seem stressed about the exam, try to relax and not let their worries affect you. Pack all the right equipment the night before so that you are prepared.

