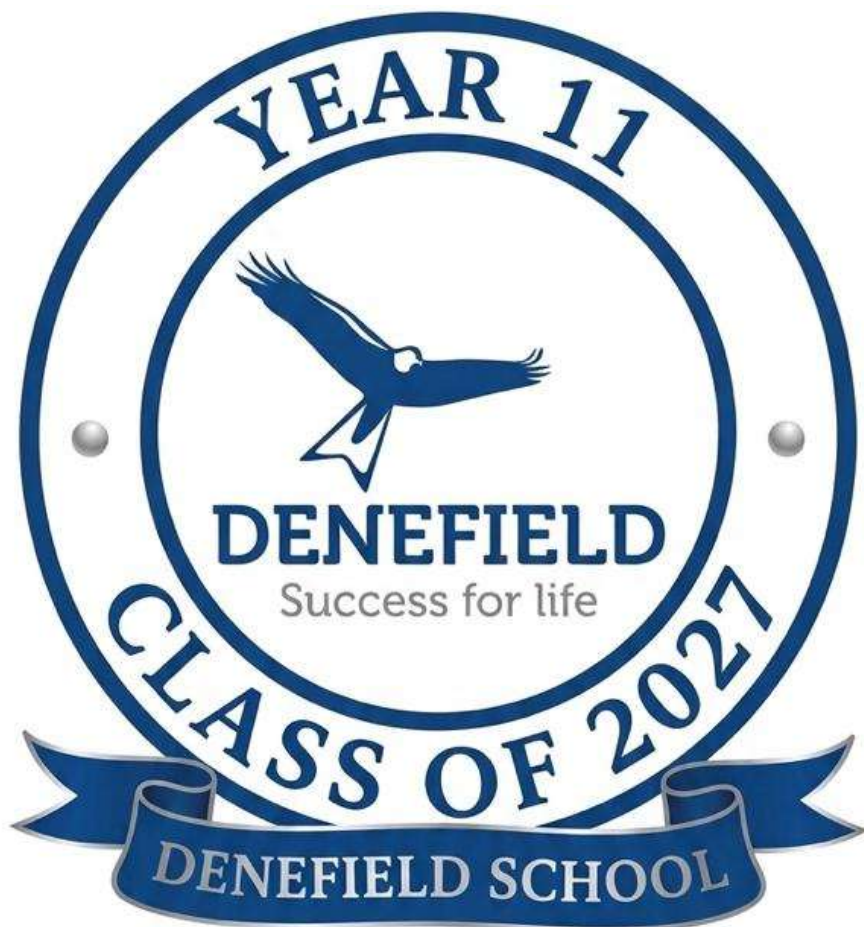


Year 11 Handbook 2026-2027



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The Year 11 Narrative

1. Overview

Year 11 is not simply the final chapter of a secondary education; it is the "final push" toward a student's future. With the foundations of their personal development firmly laid in earlier years, our collective focus now shifts from shaping character to utilizing it. We ensure that every student is present, included and recognised, enabling them to achieve their very best.

2. Student Identity: "A Student in This Year Group Is..."

A student in Year 11 is moving away from dependency and stepping into self-determination:

- **A Role Model to Their Younger Peers:** They understand their responsibility as leaders within the school. Through consistent attendance, positive behaviour and clear ambition, they role model what success looks like to younger students.
- **Proud to belong:** They feel a genuine sense of belonging at Denefield. They know they are valued members of the community and actively contribute to an environment that is inclusive and supportive of all.
- **Confident in Their Next Step:** They approach their future with clarity and confidence, supported by good habits, and a belief in their own ability. They understand that showing up consistently is the foundation of success beyond school.

3. Core Values in Action

In Year 11, we use personal development to drive academic success:

- **Ambition:** Setting targets that stretch potential and refusing to settle for "good enough".
- **Work Ethic:** Understanding that success is an indicator of consistent effort.
- **Kindness:** Supporting one another through a high-pressure year, creating a culture where everyone matters
- **Curiosity:** Looking beyond exam specifications to appreciate the value of knowledge itself.
- **Resilience:** Respond positively to setbacks, supported by staff who recognise effort, celebrate progress, and highlight success; building confidence through "catching them being good."

THE END GOAL: WALKING THROUGH THE DOOR

Qualifications open doors, but it's about how you walk through those doors. Our ultimate objective is to provide students with both the academic qualifications required to unlock the next stage of their lives, and the personal skills, emotional intelligence, and robust integrity to be the best version of themselves.

Welcome to Year 11

Dear students, parent/carer

We are delighted to welcome students back to what will be their most important year so far here at Denefield. As we enter year 11, we are incredibly excited to watch the year group continue to inspire and flourish. There will undoubtedly be a mixture of emotions ranging from nervousness to excitement, but you are resilient and aspirational and have demonstrated great determination to succeed so far in your academic journey. As we start year 11, we encourage all students to be excited for the new challenges that lie ahead this year and to tackle every new experience with courage and strength.

The year ahead will be a busy one, with PPEs (mock examinations) in November, December and later in March 2027. It is vital that students prepare thoroughly for these to maximise their experience of the examinations process. Throughout this booklet, and over the coming months students will be supported, with regular focus on revision techniques and monitoring of their progress and wellbeing.

The school will continue to set high expectations of behaviour and conduct, and we will continue to support those who are not performing to the best of their ability. Success and attendance are significantly linked, and you should aim for attendance of no lower than 96% (this equates to approximately 5 days off).

A great deal of support will be offered to students in this crucial year; a specially curated tutor time programme, after-school revision sessions, targeted revision sessions and intervention groups will benefit many of them – these will be in addition to our established routines, excellent teaching and pastoral support.

Year 11 is also a time when students start to look ahead to what they would like to do following the conclusion of their GCSEs. We will help examine and explore the different options available to you. We encourage all students to take advantage of our career's advisor, Mrs Jackson and warmly welcome you all to attend our sixth form open evening in November.

In between all this hard work there will be several opportunities to celebrate your achievements and time with us, which will reward your efforts over the past five years. These events will include the KS4 Pride of Denefield awards in December as well as the year 11 leavers breakfast in June 2027. No leavers events would be the same without the year 11 prom which will be your final event with us later in June 2027 which we look forward to celebrating your time with us.

We are very much looking forward to the year ahead and look forward to sharing your highlights and celebrating your successes over the coming year.

Mrs K Davis – Director of KS4

Miss Plumpton – Head of Year 11

The Year 11 Team

There are many members of important staff that will be involved in your year 11 journey, including your teachers and your tutors but below are some specific members of staff who will be working closely with you during year 11.

Key Staff



Mrs Davis
Assistant
Headteacher:
Director of KS4



Miss Plumpton
Head of Year 11



Mrs Hill
Year 10 and 11
Welfare Manager

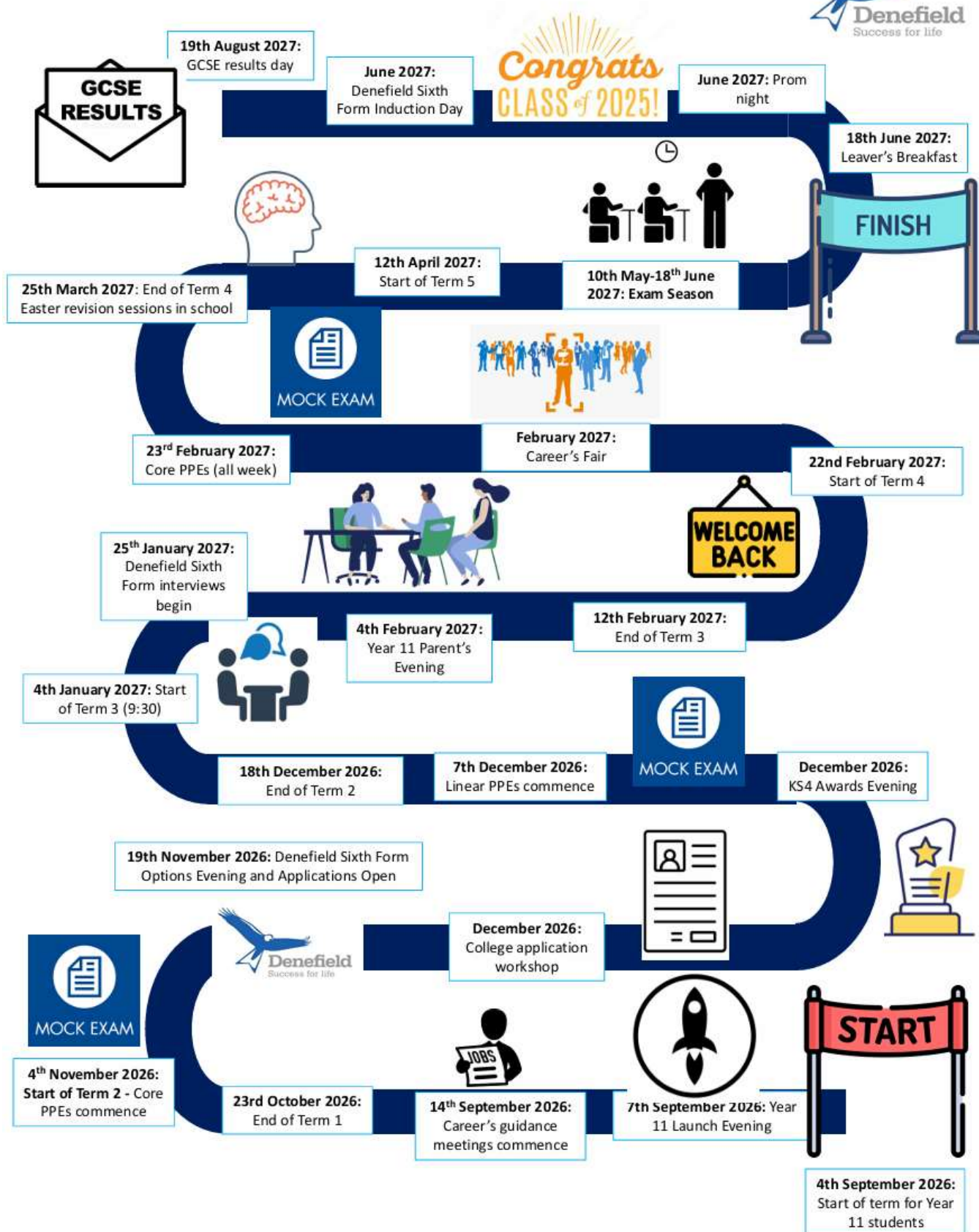


Mrs Jackson
Careers Leader



Mr Peacock
Assistant
Headteacher:
Head of Sixth
Form

Denefield Year 11 Road Map 2026-2027



Timeline of Key Dates

Date	Event
4 th September 2026	Term 1 starts for year 11 students
7 th September 2026	Year 11 launch evening for parents/carers
4 th November 2026	Core PPEs begin – all week
10 th & 12 th November 2026	Hospitality & Catering Assessment
19 th November 2026	Denefield sixth form open evening
23 rd November 2026	MFL oral PPEs begin
2 nd & 4 th December 2026	Art PPE
7 th December 2026	Non-core PPEs begin – all week
4 th January 2027	BTEC exams begin – all week
25 th January 2027	Denefield Sixth Form interviews begin
4 th February 2027	Year 11 parents' evening
23 rd March 2027	Core PPEs begin – all week
21 st & 23 rd April 2027	Final Art GCSE exam
26 th April 2027	MFL oral exams begin
10 th May 2027	GCSE exam season begins
18 th June 2027	Year 11 leavers' breakfast
June 2027	Year 11 prom

Behaviour Expectations

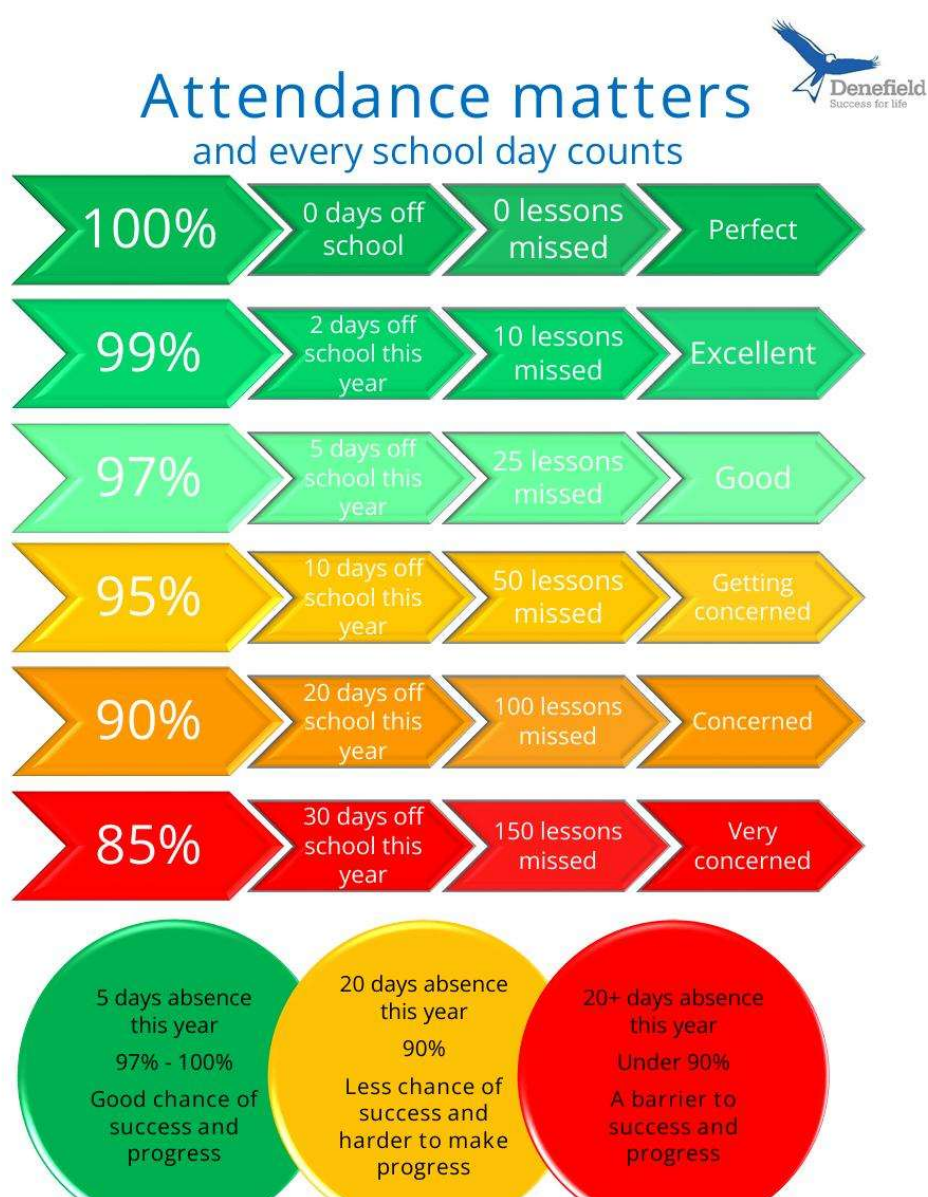
Students will...
Before school
• Be on site by 8:28 at the latest. • Greet staff as they enter tutor.
Morning tutor time
• Wear correct uniform. • Bring in correct equipment.
Between lessons
• Walk purposely to lessons and walk on the left. • Wait silently outside the classroom and await instructions to enter.
In Lessons
• Enter the classroom in silence, sit in allocated seat and work immediately on the silent and solo task – follow entry routines. • Have correct equipment ready for the lesson. • Follow staff instructions at all times. • Use 'talk partners' only when instructed. • Independent work to be completed in silence. • Be prepared to answer questions or share work upon instruction. • Always try their best. • Leave the class in silence – follow exit routines.
During social times (break and lunch)
• Interact positively with staff and peers. • Ensure they are in the correct designated areas and not 'out of bounds'. • When queuing for the canteen, queue in an orderly manner. • Walk around the school in the correct way (follow routines around yellow lines). • Report to a member of staff any negative behaviour or bullying. • Attend any detentions.
Afternoon tutor time
• See behaviour for in lessons.
After school
• Attend any detentions or interventions/revision sessions as necessary. • Go straight home, not loiter around the school unless if attending a detention. • Respect the neighbourhood and wear the uniform with pride. • Complete any extended learning/revision to best of their ability and on time.

Attendance and Punctuality

Regular attendance at school is an important factor in ensuring that young people benefit from their education. It is recognised nationally that those who have lower attendance achieve less well than those with high levels of attendance across their school life. Our expectation is that all students attend school at least 96% of the time.

It is also vital for success and achievement later life that students get into good habits regarding attendance and punctuality.

Denefield school regards this as a shared responsibility, between the school, parents/carers and students themselves, who must begin to accept responsibility for their own performance in this regard.



Punctuality

Being on time to school is as important as attendance itself. At Denefield school, the school day begins at 8:28, therefore students are required to be in the school gates by 8:28 otherwise they will be marked as late. If a student is 10 minutes late to school every day, this equates to 6.5 days of absence in the year. Being on time and getting into good habits at school helps set students up for the world of work.

Punctuality to lessons is also vital for learning. All our lessons start with a silent and solo activity. Often this involves recapping key knowledge and information. If students are late to lessons, this means they may be missing out on vital revision.

Extended Learning (Homework)



We believe that extended learning is vitally important. You are expected to complete **extended learning** that is set by your teachers. Educational research shows that, for most students, homework really does improve academic performance. For example, evidence suggests that students completing approximately two hours of homework each night are almost 10 times more likely to achieve a minimum of five strong GCSE grades.

To ensure your homework is completed why not try the following tips:

- Find a peaceful place to study.
- Establish a routine for when to complete homework e.g. at 16:00 each day.
- Organise your time to ensure that you meet your deadlines.
- Ask for help from your teachers if you are not sure what to do.
- Make sure you store all of your passwords and log in details securely.

Prom Pledge

Whilst we want all year 11 students to have the opportunity to attend the prom in June, it is important to note that prom attendance is not a right and is conditional. All students are expected to follow the below prom pledge to ensure their attendance to prom 2027.

As a student I pledge to...
• Be on time to school and to lessons every day – I understand that I must have a minimum of 96% attendance over the course of year 11. • Wear the correct uniform. • Follow all staff instructions. • Actively engage in my learning. • Complete all my homework. • Attend all detentions. • Interact positively with staff and peers. • Not engage in any form of unkindness or bullying (this includes online). • Not behave in a way that brings the school into disrepute. • Not engage in any form of physical aggression with another member of the school community – this includes punching, kicking, pushing or so called 'play fighting'. • Not engage in any form of discrimination toward any other members of the school community – this includes any forms of racism, sexism, misogyny, homophobia or transphobia. • Not bring in or be in possession of any items the school deemed to be prohibited – this includes vapes, any form of drug or smoking paraphernalia, weapons or pornography.

**Any SEND and/or other exceptional circumstances will be considered when making decisions about prom contracts and prom attendance.*

The Head of Year 11 will closely monitor all students' behaviour and attendance at regular intervals and if any behaviour or attendance concerns are identified the following process will be followed:

Identified Concern	Actions
Attendance falls significantly below 96%.	Parents to be contacted and student to be placed on prom contract which will be regularly reviewed and monitored.
Student accrues more than 20 behaviour points in a half term.	Parents to be contacted and student to be placed on prom contract which will be regularly reviewed and monitored.
Student is externally suspended.	Student will immediately be placed on a final prom contract and place at prom will be at significant risk.
Student is internally suspended more than twice.	Student will immediately be placed on a final prom contract and place at prom will be at significant risk.

Any student who does not meet the expectations of the prom pledge or any subsequent prom contract will likely be prevented from attending the prom. *Therefore, we recommend that if your child is placed on a prom contract, that you **do not** purchase anything prom-related until their attendance is confirmed.*

Tracking Your Academic Progress

In the GCSE examination years, subject specific grades targets are set for each student, and these are shared with students and their parents/carers. To monitor the individual performance of students we have seven key tracking points in year 11. These will include monitoring periods and a series of pre-public examinations (PPEs) for all subjects. Tracking points provide the class teacher with key information where students are currently working, this information will be shared with students and their parents/carers.

Should any student fall below the expected level of progress, teaching staff, faculty leaders or the Head of Year 11 will look to adopt appropriate interventions to support students.

Dates of Tracking Points

Dates	Type of Tracking
November 2026	Core PPE data analysis
November 2026	Year 11 monitoring for core subjects
January 2026	Non-core PPE data analysis
January 2026	Year 11 monitoring for option subjects
February 2026	Year 11 parents' evening
March 2026	Core PPE data analysis
March 2026	Year 11 monitoring for core subjects

Withdrawal from Subjects

There is sometimes a common misconception that if a student finds a particular subject difficult that they can just 'drop' it during year 11. This is in fact not the case.

Subject withdrawals will only be considered by the year 11 team as a last resort and only with a **sound educational reason** and once all other options or support has been exhausted.

It is only the year 11 team who can make the decision to **withdraw** a student from a subject, and this will be fully communicated with a student and their parents/carers.



Key Exam Information

This information will need to be collected from faculty teams and ideally will want to include the following:

Subject	Exam Board	Exam/Assessment Information	Useful Revision Materials
Art and Design	AQA	Component 1: Portfolio - Project 60% of GCSE Component 2: Externally set assignment - Chosen piece from externally set assignment. 10 hours of supervised time (exam)	
Biology	AQA	There are 2 exam papers at the end of year 11 – both are 1 hour 45 minutes in length. Paper 1: - Cells - Organisation - Infection & Response - Bioenergetics Paper 2: - Homeostasis - Inheritance - Ecology	Freesciencelessons Physicsandmathstutor Savemyexam
Business Studies	Edexcel	There are 2 exam papers at the end of year 11 – both are 1 hour 45 minutes in length. Paper 1: - Enterprise and entrepreneurship. - Spotting a business opportunity. - Putting a business idea into practice. - Making the business effective. - Understanding external influences on business Paper 2: - Growing the business - Making marketing decisions - Making operational decisions	Seneca BBC Bitesize Tutor2U Two teachers videos

		• Making financial decisions • Making human resource decisions	
Chemistry	AQA	There are 2 exam papers at the end of year 11 – both are 1 hour 15 minutes in length. Paper 1: • Atomic Structure and the Periodic Table • Energy • Structure and Bonding • Chemical Changes • Quantitative Chemistry Paper 2: • Rates of Reaction • Using resources • Chemical Analysis • Crude oil and Fuels • Chemistry of the atmosphere	https://www.freesciencelessons.co.uk/videos/ https://www.physicsandmathstutor.com/chemistry-revision/gcse-aqa/ https://www.savemyexams.com/gcse/chemistry/aqa/18/ Educake Revise Wizard
Computer Science	OCR	There are 2 exam papers at the end of year 11 – both are 1 hour 30 minutes in length. Paper 1 - Computer systems: • Systems architecture • Memory and storage • Computer networks, connections and protocols • Network security • Systems software • Ethical, legal, cultural and environmental impacts of digital technology Paper 2: Computational thinking, algorithms and Programming: • Algorithms • Programming fundamentals • Producing robust programs • Boolean logic • Programming languages and Integrated Development Environments	https://www.knowitallninja.com/
Design and Technology	AQA	Paper 1 – exam 2 hours' worth 50%	Seneca

		Section A – Core technical principles (20 marks) Section B – Specialist technical principles (30 marks) Section C – Designing and making principles (50 marks) NEA (Non exam assessment) worth 50%: 40-page portfolio and a practical prototype.	technologystudent.com BBC bite size Hodder education revision guide (most students already have these)
English Language	AQA	2 Paper 1 hour 45 minutes each. Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing Section A: Reading one literature fiction text Section B: Writing descriptive or narrative writing Paper 2: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives Section A: Reading one non-fiction text and one literary non-fiction text Section B: Writing: writing to present a viewpoint	Revision guides – CGP guides recommended
English Literature	AQA	2 Paper 1 hour 45 minutes each. Paper 1: Shakespeare play = Macbeth The 19th-century novel = A Christmas Carol Paper 2: Modern drama text = An Inspector Calls The poetry anthology = Love and Relationships Unseen poetry	Educake quizzes BBC Bitesize Youtube – Mr Bruff or Mr Salles Revision guides – CGP guides recommended
French	AQA	There are 4 exams – speaking, listening and reading and writing. There are 3 themes and 9 topics: • Theme 1 – people and lifestyle (relationships with family and friends, healthy living, school) • Theme 2 – popular culture (free time, festivals, celebrity culture) • Theme 3 – communication and the world around us (holidays, media and technology, environment)	Kerboodle BBC Bitesize Seneca Quizlet

Film Studies	Eduqas (WJEC)	2x Exams (35% each) 1x NEA Submission (30%) 1h 30m in length (both) Component 1: <u>Key Developments in US Film</u> Section A: Comparative unit on <i>Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956)</i> & <i>E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial (1982)</i> Section B: Evolution of film technology timeline Section C: Independent Film and critical writing. <i>Juno (2008)</i> Component 2: <u>Global Filmmaking: Narrative, Representation and Film Form</u> Section A: <i>Jojo Rabbit (2020)</i> - Narrative Section B: <i>Wadjda (2012)</i> - Representation Section C: <i>Attack The Block (2011)</i> - British Film Form NEA submission (coursework): Students create their own film extract, from filming to editing. This is accompanied by an evaluative essay.	WJEC Eduqas GCSE Film Studies Revision guide (2023 – revised edition) https://www.youtube.com/@FarrandOnFilm (GCSE Film Studies Revision playlist)
German	AQA	There are 4 exams – speaking, listening and reading and writing. There are 3 themes and 9 topics: • Theme 1 – people and lifestyle (relationships with family and friends, healthy living, school) • Theme 2 – popular culture (free time, festivals, celebrity culture) • Theme 3 – communication and the world around us (holidays, media and technology, environment)	Kerboodle BBC Bitesize Seneca Quizlet
Geography	Edexcel (A specification)	3 Papers each 1 hour and 30 minutes Paper 1: The Physical Landscape. • UK landscapes (rivers and coasts), weather hazards	Seneca BBC Bitesize Revision guides (Pearson revision guide recommended)

		and climate change, ecosystems. Paper 2: The Human Landscape - Changing Cities, global development, resources (water) Paper 3: Geographical Investigations - Physical fieldwork (rivers), human fieldwork (urban environments), UK Challenges.	
History	Edexcel	There are 3 exam papers at the end of year 11 Paper 1: - Crime and Punishment in Britain (c1000-present day) - Whitechapel (c1850-1900) Paper 2: - Anglo-Saxon and Norman England (c1060-1088) - American West (c1830-1895) Paper 3: - USA: Conflict at Home and Abroad (Civil Rights and Vietnam War, 1954-75)	GCSE pod Seneca Revision guide/booklets
BTEC Health and Social Care	Pearson	One exam and two pieces of coursework. Component 1: - Human lifespan development - Internal assessment in year 10 Component 2: - Health and social care services and values - Internal assessment in year 11 Component 3: Health and wellbeing - External exam in year 11 in January	Revision guide https://www.amazon.co.uk/BTEC-Tech-Award-Health-Social/dp/1789089093/ref=sr_1_1?crid=1R1N8YN1J7SEN&dib=eyJ2ljoIMSJ9.m7RHSVYQYB6cNzweDi_7wtU7dyRDtI_ZaDZZtLPg-V5lyEDq63s4kykhUikDCj-dltbj2xwnAKuobGgxZ4mG3fWOnccX1Uqo9RBH7SdbY5sS7yWrJdnAppbWnMNECNZW3rw-yoL-juxlbe_6EuzLsggkZRgTP0ijVxW7gOQxxf2YdfPHQWHISB18RFbYtlkB9UBNd9-yLOcWccPoxJggwjVeE5zF-ril57eGavw_cNIE.IkbqudntCceQkZq1AGdf19W9gwlh7WrW4QcAZmpx5LE&dib_tag=se&keywords=btec+tech+award+health+and+social+care&qid=1750750520&srefix=tech+award+heal%2Caps%2C78&sr=8-1
Mathematics	AQA	3 exams, one non-calculator, 2 calculator papers across 2 tiers, Foundation and Higher. All 3 are 90mins	Revision flashcards available through the school Corbett Maths Sparx Maths

PE Studies	OCR	Two exams at the end of year 11, both 60 minutes. Paper 1 - Anatomy and physiology - Physical training Paper 2 - Socio-cultural differences - Sports psychology - Health, fitness and wellbeing Practical performance 1 from individual list 1 from team list 1 from either list NEA coursework - Evaluation and analysis of performance	Revision guide https://www.amazon.co.uk/My-Revision-Notes-GCSE-Third/dp/1398373532/ref=sr_1_5?crid=2SM67QAFEIDT1&dib=eyJ2ljojMSJ9.oNehjaQITOA2fpeXzZYw3UQb6gQEZ5d1uQfwWKCOA7uQxfxOJX_CxB5WB8LxfgMqBWwlkA2fxVw6ohWu1jz--jMoCmM7ODUqBKnWJeUA-KTs9jEEbJRHWCJ50cC5QBtWoTJ32zobJEO6-WA3gITZY3gxrUncB8V8dxyjZkXVski_EAyZFxxWPXaNXNmZv0Mp8Q7ABsNE6IoovPsEdINBKV-37TkhCv2M5rjDYpJ8.q2K_IQsYvSBfmDKpaXCnMjuC4tKwVHKmSWn7Dq3MrXc&dib_tag=se&keywords=gcse+pe+ocr&qid=1750750322&prefix=gcse+pe+ocr%2Caps%2C114&sr=8-5 Revision cards https://www.amazon.co.uk/Grade-Physical-Education-Revision-Question/dp/1789084180/ref=sr_1_3?crid=2SM67QAFEIDT1&dib=eyJ2ljojMSJ9.oNehjaQITOA2fpeXzZYw3UQb6gQEZ5d1uQfwWKCOA7uQxfxOJX_CxB5WB8LxfgMqBWwlkA2fxVw6ohWu1jz--jMoCmM7ODUqBKnWJeUA-KTs9jEEbJRHWCJ50cC5QBtWoTJ32zobJEO6-WA3gITZY3gxrUncB8V8dxyjZkXVski_EAyZFxxWPXaNXNmZv0Mp8Q7ABsNE6IoovPsEdINBKV-37TkhCv2M5rjDYpJ8.q2K_IQsYvSBfmDKpaXCnMjuC4tKwVHKmSWn7Dq3MrXc&dib_tag=se&keywords=gcse+pe+ocr&qid=1750750281&prefix=gcse+pe+ocr%2Caps%2C114&sr=8-3
Physics	AQA	There are 2 exam papers at the end of year 11 – both are 1 hour 45 minutes in length. Paper 1: - Energy - Electricity - Particle model of matter - Atomic Structure Paper 2: - Forces	Freesciencelessons Physicsandmathstutor Savemyexams

		• Waves • Electromagnetism • Space	
Sociology	AQA	There are 2 exam papers at the end of year 11 – both are 1 hour 45 minutes in length. Paper 1: • Families and Households • Education Paper 2: • Crime and Deviance • Social Stratification	Seneca Tutor 2u Sociology tutor2u
Spanish	AQA	There are 4 exams – speaking, listening and reading and writing. There are 3 themes and 9 topics: • Theme 1 – people and lifestyle (relationships with family and friends, healthy living, school) • Theme 2 – popular culture (free time, festivals, celebrity culture) • Theme 3 – communication and the world around us (holidays, media and technology, environment)	Kerboodle BBC Bitesize Seneca Quizlet
BTEC Sport	Pearson	One exam and two pieces of coursework Component 1: Preparing participants to take part in sport and physical activity. Internal assessment in year 10 Component 2: Taking part and improving other participating sporting performance. Internal assessment in year 11 Component 3: Developing fitness to improve other participants performance in sport and physical activity External assessment in January of year 11.	Everlearner Revision guide https://www.amazon.co.uk/Pearson-REVISE-Award-Sport-Revision/dp/129243614X/ref=sr_1_2?cr_id=SVQDDDVNOAOV&dib=eyJ2ljojMSJ9.ol9hIAWrt_H0-rUX2iIE8CdyYA2GzcUBjKmSyLWh3yd_hUMCUWwsOOBblZOiSuXvLJdnanzBrB_QytuMmKAcH2a4glu6W_f5tfvdetgu4TTREadvxkPNrOub2BA4x4QLTW8Rsx5Kf5Ut88ip99wzHLn46Vkl8Tk691ZCzWO_Wuw5vbA9gYWxtqRgm5QF8pncdx_OrFjqXrWaluBhcPs3QLlg78JE9kHeNsxpXqMRq1U.5licCrJc-CqXkSU4QgU3CA8hNfRUyWPndWAuj_4tLA&dib_tag=se&keywords=btec+tech+award+sport&qid=1750750757&sprefix=btec+tech+award+spor%2Caps%2C90&sr=8-2

BTEC Travel and Tourism	Pearson	Components 1 and 2 are completed in school time. Component 3 is an exam. It is on Influences on Global travel and Tourism. It lasts 2 hours.	
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Effective Revision Strategies

Effective revision is crucial to a students' chances of success in their GCSE exams. It is important that all students revise extensively and effectively to ensure that they are fully prepared for their exams throughout year 11.

Strategies such as re-reading your notes, highlighting large parts of a revision guide may feel like revision, but have little, or no impact on a students' ability to remember key information in the long run. Evidence suggests there are several **effective** revision strategies, and these are described below.

Dos	Don'ts
Work in a silent space.	Simply write out notes or copy from a textbook/exercise book.
Leave your mobile phone in a different room.	Cram revision in the 'final minutes' – this overloads your working memory and can cause stress and anxiety.
Turn off all distractions including the TV and music – if you need music, ensure it is instrumental .	Re-read notes and do nothing with the information.
Revise with a family member rather than friends.	Highlight information for the sake of it.
Revise in smaller chunks – 25 minutes at a time and then take a five-minute break.	Work in a loud/busy space – attempting to revise while multi-tasking and doing other things isn't effective.
Space out your revision.	Only focus on comfort zone revision – you need to revise the hard stuff!

There is NO evidence that people learn better in different ways.

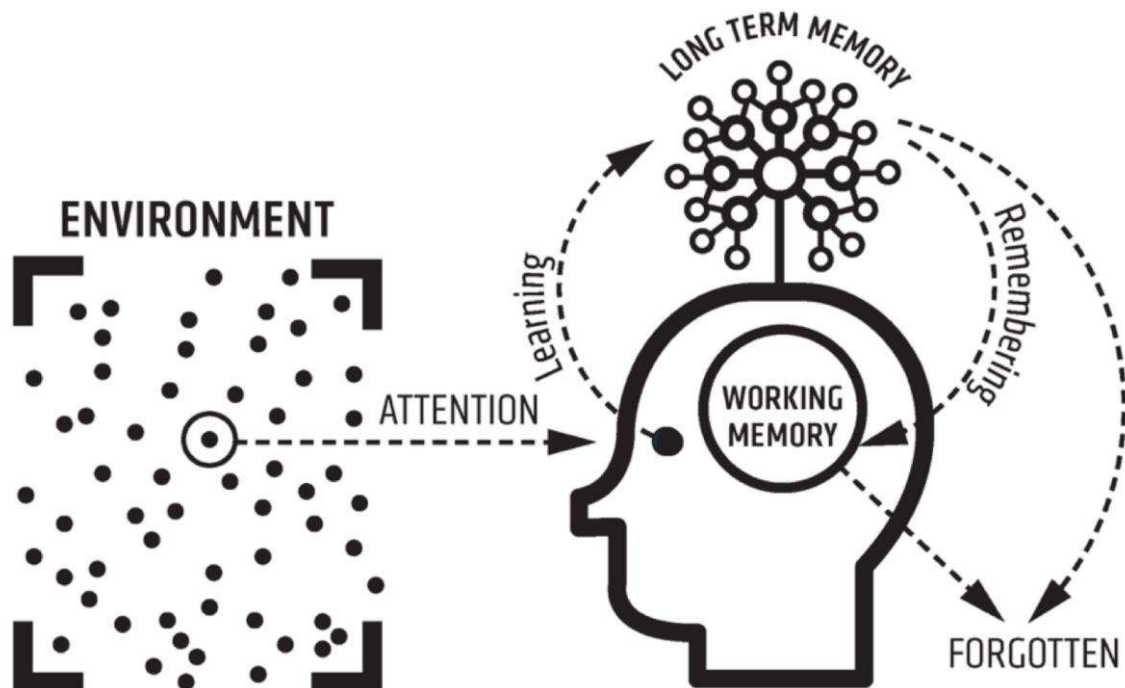
When it comes to revision, what works is **retrieval practice** in a quiet, distraction free environment. This method is the most effective when material is returned to after larger intervals.

Students should use methods that make them **think the hardest** because when they are thinking hard, they will remember more.

It can be hard to revise like this because student may feel that they are repeatedly pointing out to themselves things that they do not know and that can feel scary – especially at the beginning – so you may need some support from staff and your parents.

Memory – The Science of Learning

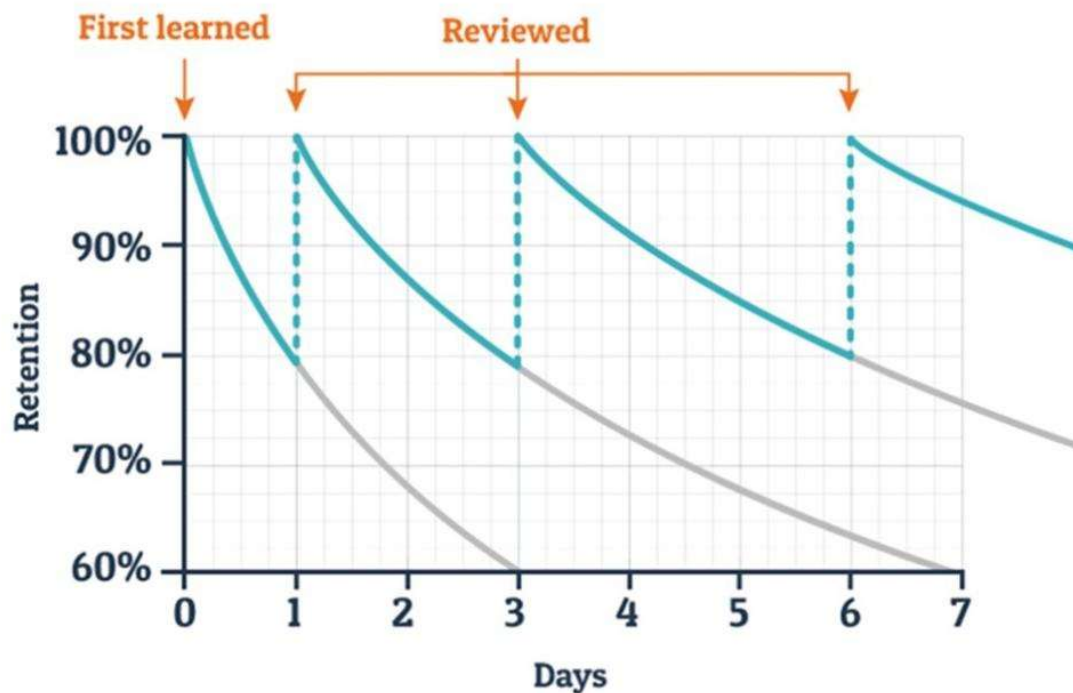
In recent years, there has been lots of research around the science of learning and how we learn and retain information.



1. We are all different and we vary depending on the individual or the environment we are in. In the diagram above, **attention** means we acknowledge **new information**, and this is then transferred into our working memory.
2. Our **working memory** is where you do your thinking and where you take in new information. It is **limited** and can only hold a **limited amount of information** at any given time – research suggests we hold between 5-9 pieces of information at any one time. We can hold information in our working memory for up to 30 seconds.
3. Information is processed into our **long-term memory** through **learning**. Our long-term memory is effectively **unlimited**, and we can retrieve information from here back to our working memory when needed (e.g. in an exam/assessment). When we remember something, it comes from our long-term memory (e.g. a key date in history or a key quote from A Christmas Carol). However, if we don't use this information it slowly fades (is forgotten). **Learning is therefore a change to your long-term memory.** Therefore, revision activities must require you to think hard.
4. Information in our long-term memory is interconnected and linked with prior knowledge. Anything not connected or not successfully stored well enough in our long-term memory is forgotten and this is completely natural.
5. If students undertake enough **retrieval practice**, generating the information in our long-term memory, it increases our knowledge and confidence within the subject – **practice makes perfect!**

Forgetting

Forgetting is completely natural. Research has shown over time you forget a majority of what you've learnt and this happens almost immediately. The below diagram outlines this process and is called the **Ebbinghaus Forgetting Curve (1885)**.



Ebbinghaus proposed that humans start to losing 'memory of knowledge' over time unless the **knowledge is consciously reviewed time and time again**. Ebbinghaus consistently tested himself over a period of time to see if he could remember a set of meaningless words. He found:

- Memory retention (ability to remember things) is 100% at the time of learning any particular piece of information (in the moment) – however this drops to 60% after three days.
- A range of factors affect the rate of forgetting including motivation, whether the information has meaning, the strategies for revision and other psychological factors e.g. sleep.
- If each day, repetition of learning occurs (revision) and students take time to repeat information then the effects of forgetting are decreased, and you retain information **for longer**.
- According to research, information should be repeated within the first 24 hours of learning to reduce the rate of memory loss.

What do we know about memory?

1. Consistent practice and revisiting previous material strengthen memory and boosts learning.
2. Our working memory is limited so overloading this or cramming for revision doesn't work.
3. Information, if not revisited, is 'lost' from memory.



Retrieval Practice

Simply put, recalling information from memory is simple and powerful. Retrieval practice is a learning strategy which makes you **think hard** and brings information to mind. It is the action of actively retrieving knowledge that boosts learning and **strengthens memory**. This builds confidence over time and allows you to **identify gaps in your knowledge**.

Successful examples of this include:

- Knowledge retrieval/quizzing, low stakes testing and multiple-choice tests.
- Completing past papers and questions.
- Answer verbal questions asked by teachers/parents or carers.
- Effective note taking (Cornell notes)
- Creating flashcards

Effective Revision Strategies

There is NO evidence that people learn better in different ways.

When it comes to revision, what works is retrieval practice in a **quiet, distraction free environment**. This method is most effective when material is returned to after increasingly larger intervals.

Students should use the methods that make them think the hardest because when they are thinking hard, they will remember more.



Key Principles of Revision

Motivation

You can learn. You have learnt so many things in your life, e.g. how to walk, talk and read, perhaps to ride a bike or to swim, the words to songs, the names of friends. What's critical for this is that you wanted to do it and you kept trying. Learning is not always easy but if you keep going, you will get there.

Creating an Effective Revision Environment

Remember our **attention is limited**, if your attention becomes split with other things, then you will learn and remember less. To revise and learn effectively, you should use techniques which free up your working memory and stop it from becoming overwhelmed. One way to do this is working in an environment which is free from distractions.

Find a quiet, tidy room with minimal distractions – your bedroom, library or classroom.

Put your revision timetable, exam timetable and other documents visible on your wall

Make sure you have a drink and snack with you, staying hydrated and full is important



Put your phone in another room, it is too much of a distraction -

Loud music is a distraction, if you must listen, it needs to be low tempo, without lyrics

Have all your revision materials and stationary on your desk ready to go - make it obvious

While phones maybe a brilliant invention in many ways, research has found that they have a **negative impact** on revision and learning. They can **reduce concentration** and impact working memory. They can impact your sleep and ultimately reduce your motivation.

Work Hard and Think Harder

When you read over notes or highlight key terms, it feels good because it *feels* like new information is going into your head. It is comforting because it reminds you of things you have learnt.

However, research suggests that these methods are very low impact; they do not help you remember much at all. **Techniques where you have to think more have a much bigger impact** on how much you remember but they sometimes feel less effective because they show you what you do not know which can be scary. Testing yourself is associated with much bigger learning gains than reading information/highlighting text but your student will need reminding of this because it will not always feel that way.

Examples of Effective Revision

Method 1: Cornell Notes

Cornell note taking supports the student in **focussing on the key information** in a piece of text or video. It helps the student **think hard about what they are reading/watching** and organise the material in a useful way

To take Cornell notes all you need to:

1. Take a piece of paper.
2. Rule across the top and add an appropriate title.
3. Draw a line down the page to create a left-hand margin for key terms or questions.
4. This leaves a larger section for the information (which should be linked to the key term or question).
5. Rule a few lines off at the bottom of the page for a summary of the notes.

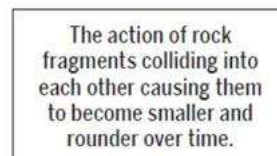
Keywords:	Notes:
	Types of Matter
Solids	I. Solids A. Have a definite shape B. Have a definite volume
Liquids	II. Liquids A. Do not have a definite shape B. Have a definite volume
Gases	III. Gases A. Do not have a definite shape B. Do not have a definite volume
Summary: (Insert summary of lecture after class.)	

Methods like this are really useful for students **using videos** at home to revise. Just watching the video is not very effective because the student is not having to think hard but summarising the information and attaching it to a key term or question means they have to think much more.

When completed, the notes can be used for by either covering the key terms/questions and describing what the notes say or reading the notes and generating the key term/question.

Method 2: Flashcards

One effective strategy is the creation and use of **flashcards**. Flashcards are generally a card containing a small amount of information on either side as an aid to learning. The use of flashcards is for **low stakes testing** to improve recall and to strengthen memory.



An effective flashcard may include the following (subject dependent):

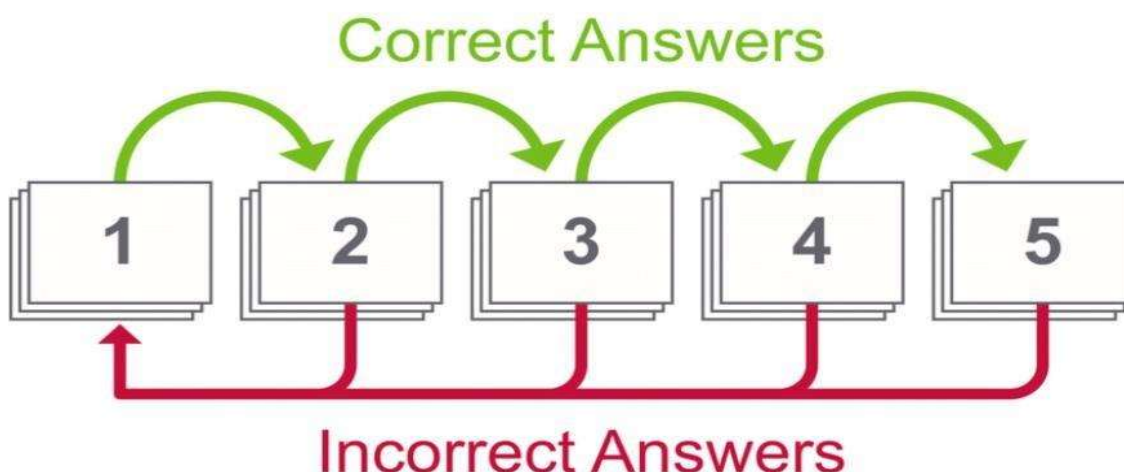
- A key term/key word with a definition on the back.
- A key date with the event on the back.
- A key equation with its use in practice on the back.

To use flashcards most effectively, the **Leitner Method** is the desired strategy for spaced testing. Use the following method:

1. Create a set of flashcards with a question on one side and an answer on the other.
2. Read the question and think hard about the answer.
3. Say the answer **out loud** – because they you say and hear it as well as seeing it.
4. Create five boxes marked as the following:

BOX 1	BOX 2	BOX 3	BOX 4	BOX 5
Every day	Every other day	Twice a week	Once a week	Once a fortnight

5. Start with all the cards in box 1. Any card you get correct, moves to box 2. Cards that are incorrect remain in box 1. Cards that are incorrectly answered will be moved back to box 1 and so on and so on with cards moving from one space to the right if you get them correct and one space to the left if you get them wrong.



Method 3: Blurting

1. Think about a topic, e.g. causes of the Second World War.
2. Write them down.
3. Check your notes/knowledge organiser/revision guide and add on the **bits you left out** in red. Check for errors and change them. Adding on and **editing in a different colour** is useful because it highlights the bits you had forgotten/got wrong.



Most students will be tempted to read their notes/revise before blurting but thinking about a topic even if you remember nothing, is associated with better remembering later.

The correcting/adding, on phase three above, is essential because this is about the student **evaluating the quality of their work** and highlighting the things that they missed that time and can be **focussed on next time**. Students should read the new information aloud as they add it so that they are writing it, saying it and hearing it – all of which will help to consolidate the information.

Blurting is a great technique to master and can be used even if you only have a few minutes because you can just cover one small topic.

Method 4: Mind mapping

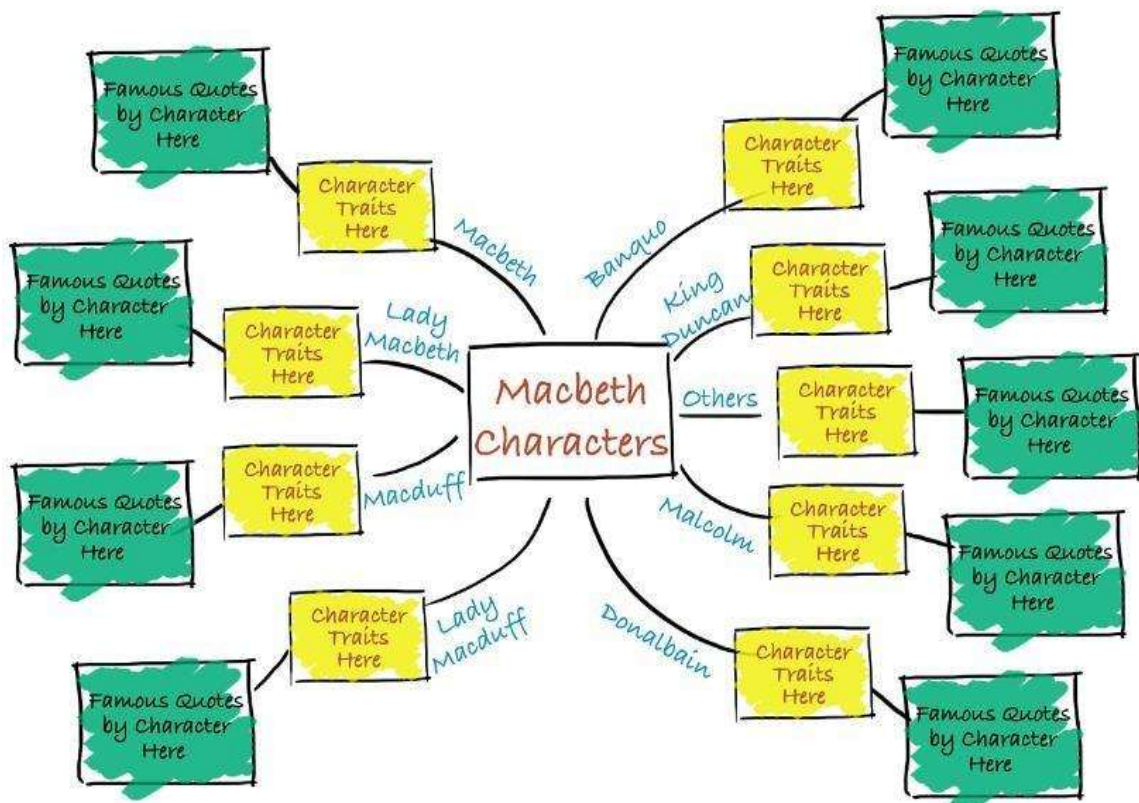
A mind map is a diagram that provides a summary of a topic or idea.

Producing a mind map can help students to organise all their knowledge on one topic onto a single sheet of paper. Images/diagrams can be used to dual code the information and improve recall.

The most effective way to mind map is to try and produce the first version from memory (effectively a mind map blurt). Once version one is complete, students should return to the mind map with their notes and a red pen – **correcting any errors** and **adding any extra information** that they missed the first time.

How to create a mind map

1. Put your main idea or topic (e.g. Macbeth characters) in the middle of a page and draw a circle around it. This will be your starting point. This could be a picture or text.
2. Draw branches and label them (with, e.g. the character name) to connect the central idea to the next sub-topic (e.g. character traits). Again, this could be done with a picture instead of, or as well as, text.
3. Add more branches as required until all the information on one topic is included.
4. **Look for connections** between different topics and add labelled lines between them to help remind you of similarities/differences.



Method 5: Practice Past Papers

1. Do as many past paper questions as you can.
2. Mark them.
3. Edit your answers in red pen whenever you have got something wrong or left something out.
4. Identify repeated phrases in mark schemes – the same/similar questions are used again and again and this is your opportunity to learn what the examiner wants to see.
5. Look at the examiner's report for each past paper and check what not to do as well as what the examiner most wanted to see.



Planning Revision

Why make a plan?

Exams can make you anxious. Whilst a bit of anxiety will help your child perform at the very best level in their exams, too much anxiety will not. A revision plan puts your child in control, it **reduces stress**, means they are less likely to miss things out and is more efficient – because revision time is spent revising not thinking at every session about what they should revise.

"IF YOU
FAIL
TO PLAN,
YOU PLAN
TO
FAIL"

Making it manageable

Your child needs to **revise everything they have been taught**. This can seem overwhelming at the beginning and sometimes the magnitude of the task can put you off starting.

A good place to begin, might be to RAG specifications – putting an R next to topics that seem most unfamiliar, A next to those you remember some of and G next to things you are very confident with. Students can then focus most of the revision on the red areas. Subjects also have knowledge organisers that tend to summarise whole topics on one or two pages and seeing the information in this format might make exam preparation more achievable.

Interleaving

Interleaving involves switching between ideas and topics during a study session and not revising in blocks of topics. This ensures that you are not studying one idea or topic for too long. Mixing up your revision strengthens your memory.



For example, instead of organising your revision week like this:

M	T	W	T	F
MACBETH	AN INSPECTOR CALLS	CREATIVE WRITING	UNSEEN POETRY	JEKYLL AND HYDE
MACBETH	AN INSPECTOR CALLS	CREATIVE WRITING	UNSEEN POETRY	JEKYLL AND HYDE
MACBETH	AN INSPECTOR CALLS	CREATIVE WRITING	UNSEEN POETRY	JEKYLL AND HYDE

A much more effective way of organising your revision would be like this:

M	T	W	T	F
MACBETH	UNSEEN POETRY	AN INSPECTOR CALLS	JEKYLL AND HYDE	CREATIVE WRITING
AN INSPECTOR CALLS	JEKYLL AND HYDE	CREATIVE WRITING	MACBETH	UNSEEN POETRY
CREATIVE WRITING	MACBETH	UNSEEN POETRY	AN INSPECTOR CALLS	JEKYLL AND HYDE

Studying one topic at a time can give the impression that you have mastered it but often this can be misleading.

Creating a Revision Timetable

1. Be realistic about what time you have. Remember, to be most effective, you should try to revise for **no longer than 25 minutes** without a five-minute break.
2. **Mix the subjects up** – it is tempting to revise everything for one subject before starting on another, but you are more likely to remember more if you **space your learning** and you lower the risk of having too much time for some subjects and not enough time for others. Aim to leave at **least two days in between**.
3. Think about the mix – revising stuff you find difficult is hard work and can be a bit demotivating. Try to put a mix of subjects you like and do not like as much every day so that you have things to look forward to.
4. Be flexible – **plan some rewards and treats**. If you want to go out in the evening, then plan to start work later the next day. Put it somewhere visible and tick off completed sessions – **see the success!**
5. Make good use of your time. Blurting on a small topic might only take four-five minutes and then the checking against your notes another ten. This means that even with a spare 15 minutes you could do some effective learning.

Don't let this be you...
Plan ahead!

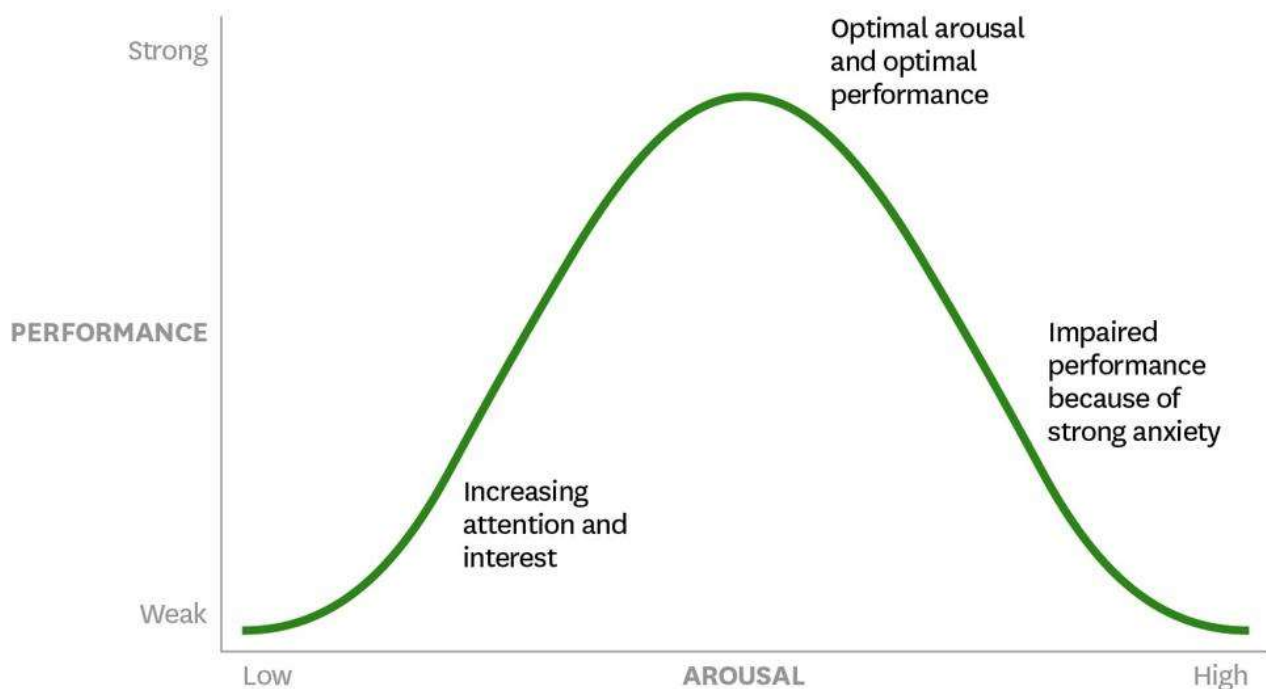
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Topic	Maths – Area and Perimeter 30mins		RS – Islamic Beliefs 30mins	English Lit – Of mice and men 30mins		Physics – Static Electricity 30mins	Biology – Ecology 30mins
15 mins break	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
Topic	Physics – Motion and Forces 30mins		Maths – Trigonometry 30mins	Physics – Motion and Forces 30mins		RS – Christian beliefs 30mins	Physics – Light 30mins
15 mins break	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
Topic	History – Cold War 30mins		English Lit – Of mice and men 30mins	English Lang – Writing 30mins		Maths – Percentages 30mins	Biology – Human Body 30mins
15 mins break	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
Topic						History – USA 30mins	History – Cold War 30mins
15 mins break						✓	✓
Topic						Chemistry – Atomic Structure 30mins	Chemistry – Periodic structure 30mins
Total hours	1.5hrs		1.5hrs	1.5hrs		2.5hrs	2.5 hrs

Managing Stress During Year 11

Feeling anxious about exams is normal and **some anxiety improves performance**. However, too much anxiety is a problem and if you use the the revision techniques suggested above and you plan effectively as outlined here and are still not managing that anxiety, please make sure you speak to school – to their tutor in the first instance and we will identify the correct measures to support you.

The Yerkes-Dodson Law

How anxiety affects performance.



SOURCE ROBERT M. YERKES AND JOHN D. DODSON

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JCQ Exam Regulations



On your **exam day**

This checklist will help you to be as prepared as possible for your exams, so that on the day itself you can focus on doing your best.

Before sitting your exams, ensure you know:

- ☐ the date, time and location of your exams – you might find it helpful to write this information in a calendar or planner
- ☐ who to contact at school or college in case there's an emergency that makes you late or unable to sit your exam

What you cannot take into exams:

- ☐ any type of phone
- ☐ revision notes
- ☐ any type of watch (this includes analogue, digital and smart watches)



What you will need:

- ☐ a clear pencil case
- ☐ at least two black ink pens – blue pens are not acceptable
- ☐ an approved calculator for relevant exams
- ☐ appropriate apparatus such as a ruler or protractor for relevant exams
- ☐ a clear water bottle if you wish to take one in – it must not have a label



Other important information:

- ☐ Listen carefully to the invigilator's instructions which will be specific to your exam. If you are unsure of anything, please raise your hand and wait for the invigilator.
- ☐ Fill in your details on the front of your answer booklet.
- ☐ If you need additional answer sheets, raise your hand and wait for an invigilator who will provide you with one. Remember to add your details to this booklet too.
- ☐ If you need to use the toilet or feel unwell, raise your hand and wait for an invigilator who will escort you from the exam room.
- ☐ Make sure you stay silent – talking to a fellow candidate could result in disqualification from all your exams.

If you have any questions about the format on the day, please ask your teacher or exams officer.





AI and Assessments

A quick guide for students



What is AI?

- AI stands for artificial intelligence and using it is like having a computer that thinks
- AI tools like ChatGPT or Snapchat My AI can write text, make art and create music by learning from data from the internet, but watch out – they can also make things up and be biased



How can AI be misused in assessments?

AI misuse is when you take something made using AI and say it's your own work.

THIS IS CHEATING!



How do I make sure I don't misuse AI?



1 Know the rules

- You're **not allowed** to use AI tools when you're in an exam
- Your teachers will tell you if you're allowed to use AI tools when doing your coursework – the rules will depend on your qualification
- Even if you're allowed to use AI tools, you can't get marks for content just produced by AI – your marks come from showing your own understanding and producing your own work

2 Reference reference reference!

- If you're allowed to use AI tools, you must reference them clearly
- Name the AI tool you used
 - Add the date you generated the content
 - Explain how you used it
 - Save a screenshot of the questions you asked and the answers you got

3 Declare it's all your own work

– When you hand in your assessment, you have to sign a declaration. Anything without a reference must be all your own work. If you've used an AI tool, don't sign the declaration until you're sure you've added all the references

REMEMBER

Misusing AI is cheating!

Know the rules

Talk to your teachers

Reference clearly

What happens if I misuse AI?

If you've misused AI, you could lose your marks for the assessment – you could even be disqualified from the subject.

DON'T RISK IT!



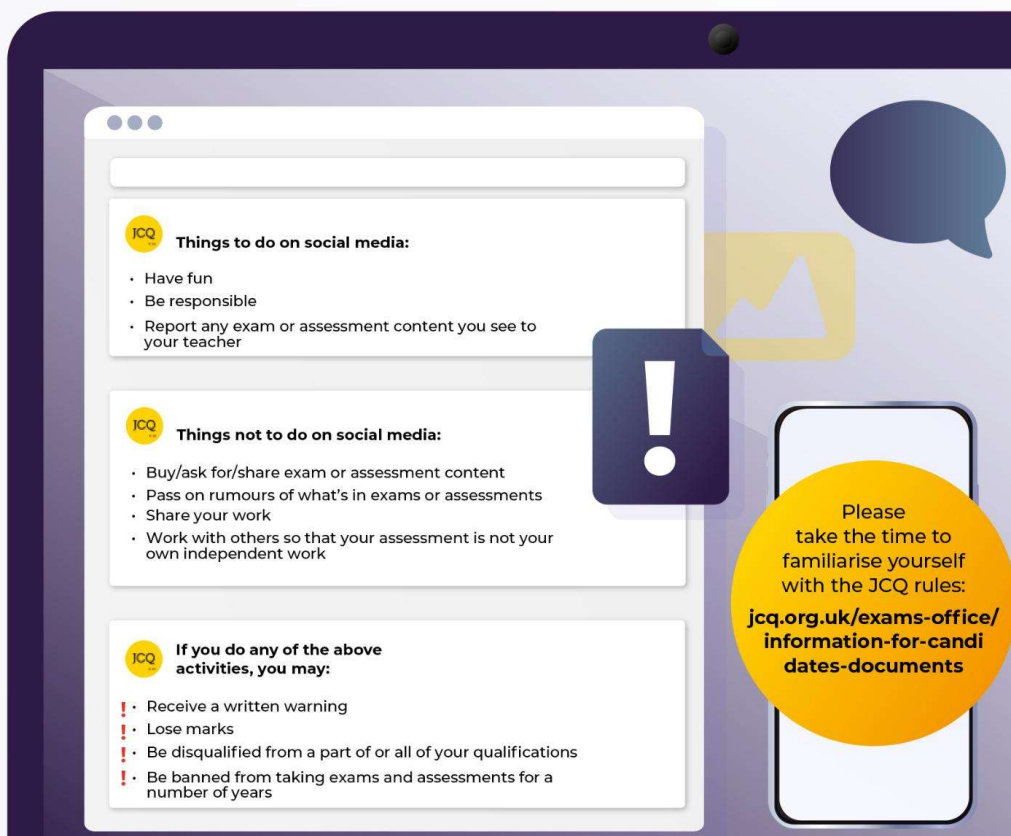


Information for candidates

Using social media and examinations/assessments

While we like to share our experiences online, when it comes to exams and other assessments, we have to be careful.

- Sharing ideas online can be helpful when you're studying or revising
- However, sharing certain information (see information on the right) can break the rules and could affect your results
- If you're not sure what you can and can't discuss online, check with your teacher
- If you receive exam content on social media, you must tell your teacher
- Don't be caught out by scammers selling fake exam papers

JCQ Things to do on social media:

- Have fun
- Be responsible
- Report any exam or assessment content you see to your teacher

JCQ Things not to do on social media:

- Buy/ask for/share exam or assessment content
- Pass on rumours of what's in exams or assessments
- Share your work
- Work with others so that your assessment is not your own independent work

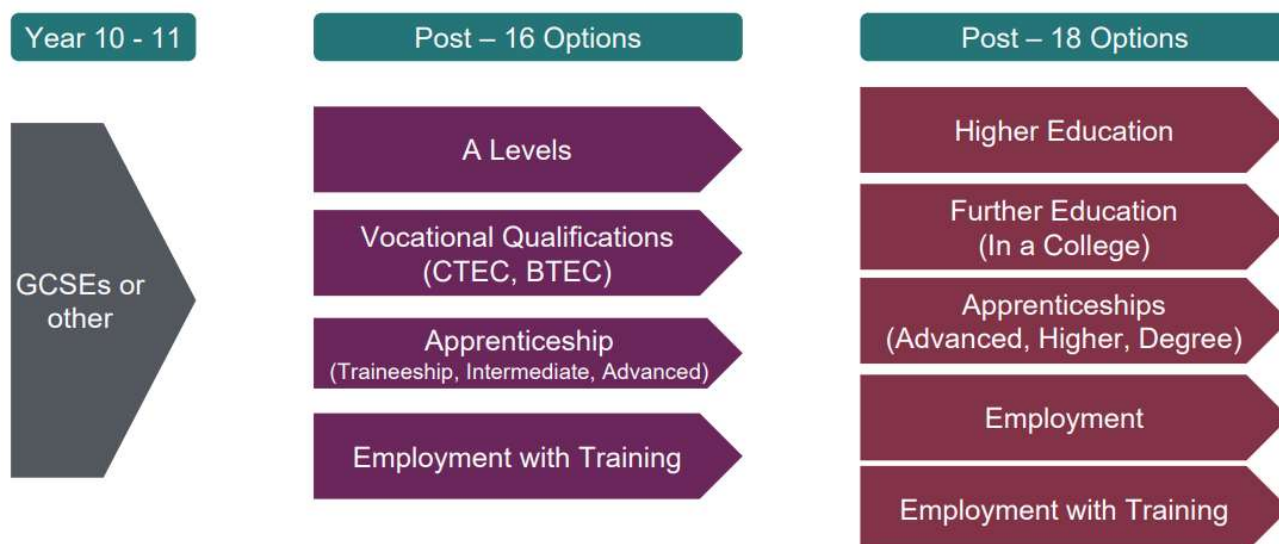
JCQ If you do any of the above activities, you may:

- ! Receive a written warning
- ! Lose marks
- ! Be disqualified from a part of or all of your qualifications
- ! Be banned from taking exams and assessments for a number of years

Please take the time to familiarise yourself with the JCQ rules:
jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents

Next Steps – Post 16 Options

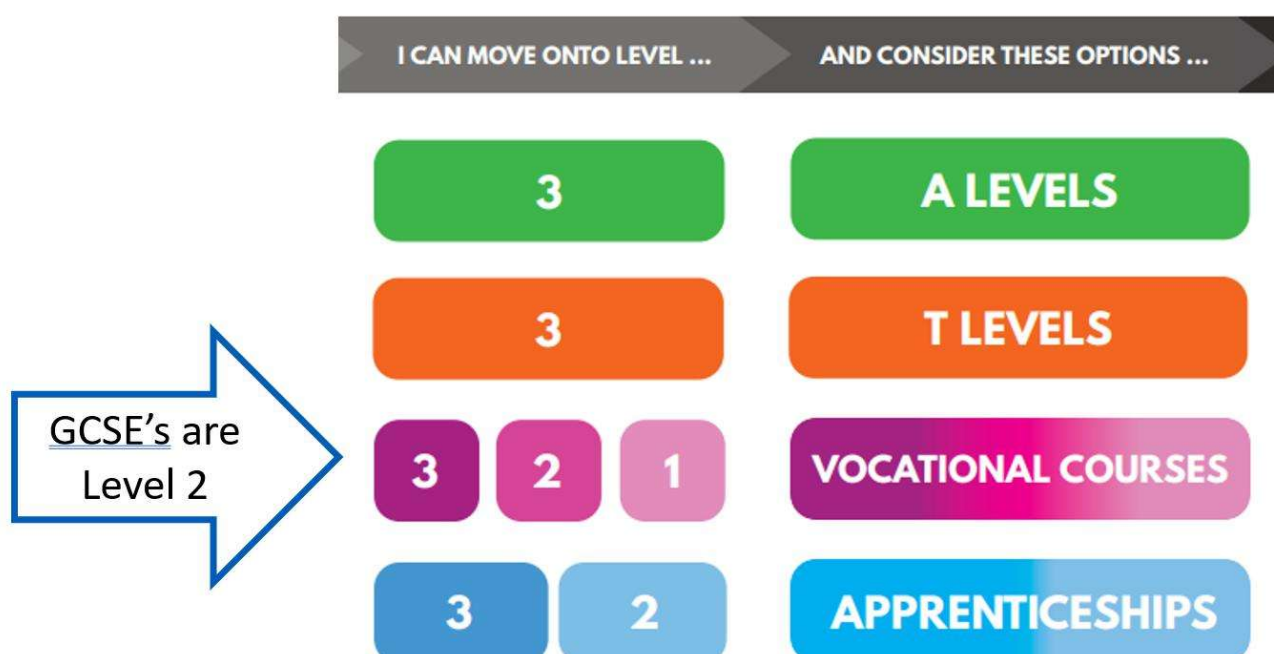
What are the choices post-16?



Where can I study?

- Denefield sixth form
- Other school sixth form
- Further education college
- With an employer and a training provider.

What can I study?



Post 16 options

There are several options available to you after year 11. Below provides a simple summary on what these may look like:

A Levels	Vocational Courses	Apprenticeships
Most students choose to take 3 subjects – some make take more. There are minimum grade requirements to be eligible for the course.	These are specialist qualifications for example BTECs. These provide an insight into an industry and provide an alternative to A-Levels.	These combine practical job training with a formal program of study allowing individuals to learn skill while earning a wage.

Denefield Sixth Form

We strongly encourage our year 11 students attend the sixth form open evening on 19th November 2026. Here you will have the opportunity to discuss possible next steps for you. Applications to Denefield sixth form with open on shortly thereafter.

Entry Requirements

Pathway	Subject-based requirement	Average grade across the top 8 subjects
A Level	5	5
Vocational (three BTECs)	4	4
Blended (two A Levels and one BTECs or one A Level and two BTECs)	5 in A Level subjects and 4 in BTEC subjects	4.5
Four A Level subjects	7	7

How can we assist you?

There are several ways we can help you navigate your way through your options after year 11. Here are just a few:

- Group sessions or workshops with Mrs Jackson or external advisors from colleges etc
- 1:1 careers advisor session
- Visit from colleges to speak with you.
- Assistance at Sixth form open evening
- Useful links provided on ClassCharts and the [Futures Bulletin](#)
- Attend in person or virtual Insight days to support with apprenticeship applications.
- Updated information on the careers section of the website.
- Using the Unifrog career platform for research.
- Providing help with an all-important back-up plan.
- Help on GCSE exam results day in August 2026.



Guidance sessions



Mrs Jackson will be scheduling appointments from the end of Year 10 through to October half term. If you need support before your appointment is scheduled, please speak with either your tutor or Mr Beard who will see if your appointment can be brought forward.

Information discussed in these sessions is confidential (unless there is a safeguarding concern). Mrs Jackson's advice will be **impartial** and is aimed to help you **make the best decision for you**.

During these meetings Mrs Jackson will work with you to create an action plan and help you research your options and choices further. Remember it's ok to say that you '**don't know**' – we are here to

help and support you.

When to apply

Open evenings – colleges	From now onwards
Colleges – applications	Open from September/October 2026, stay open until the course is full.
Sixth form – applications	November/December 2026, each school will have an application window around this time
Denefield sixth form – open evening	19 November 2026
Apprenticeships	Advertised year round, with many big employers from September, but the main window from January to May.

How Can Parents/Carers Help?

The last words of this booklet are for parents and carers.

If you find yourself struggling to support your child through their revision, having told them for the umpteenth time to knuckle down and revise. If you've bought yet another stack of highlighter pens so they can continue to cover their notes in dayglow green and orange, if you've helped them plan yet another revision timetable because they have not managed to stick to the last eight iterations, and if you are trying to manage stress levels for all members of the family as the exams loom, then all is not lost.

It's an onerous task being the parent/carer of a revising student. Learning can be complicated and any help we can get with the process is most welcome.

The content of this booklet is not simply about revision, rather it is about promoting effective study habits that will stay with students throughout their lives. The more we can support young people in developing effective study habits, the better they will become at studying and performing in assessments and exams,

HOWEVER, if you simply don't have the time to go through every aspect of the booklet but want to know what will make the biggest difference to your child's revision then below will help your child's revision more effective.



Go through this booklet together



Help them plan their revision timetable



Keep them motivated



Make sure they stick to their plan



Help them revise



Make sure they have a calm and peaceful place to revise



Make sure they eat well and don't skip meals



Make sure they get the right amount of sleep



Make sure they exercise



And don't forget to build in some time for them to relax, with or without you!