



# Student

## Revision Advice Pack

A close-up, blue-tinted photograph of a computer keyboard. The central focus is a key with the word 'knowledge' written on it in white. Other keys, including one with the letter 'Z' and another with 'ctrl', are visible in the background, slightly out of focus. The lighting creates a strong horizontal highlight across the keys.

knowledge



“ELITE Tuition do not only focus on the academic material of the course but on the optimum methodologies for revision and learning.” - Dr Jane Maloney (Educational Psychologist)

With exams around the corner, students are increasingly more aware of the need of a good revision plan. It is easy to spend too much valuable time in creating the perfect revision timetable.

However, the biggest hurdle students face is in finding the RIGHT way to revise.

We at ELITE Tuition have created this revision advice pack to give the you clear and structured advice on how to use your time, plan a revision schedule and what to do during your breaks.

A common misconception is that breaks are bad. Breaks are considered to be a necessary evil which one must take to avoid exhaustion. This is incorrect. Medical studies confirm that breaks are critical for creating better neurological connections which leads to better learning and memory.

This booklet aims to give students practical ways to revise based on expert teaching and learning techniques, cutting edge science and top tips from previous high achieving students.

“Intense revision for months on end takes it out of you. I’m so glad I learnt how to use breaks to help my learning.” - Maria Gomez

This pack will outline the do’s and don’ts for revision with practical techniques and highlight how to use breaks to help your revision. And finally, this pack will explain how to use past papers for the maximum development of examination technique.

We ask that you share your pearls of wisdom with future generations of students by emailing us at [info@elitetuition.com](mailto:info@elitetuition.com).





## Dr Paul Black

Leading researcher into Teaching and Learning. Author of the award winning Black Box series including "Inside the Black Box."

## The correct Attitude for Revision

Revising for exams is an incredibly emotional experience and students are constantly battling fears that the exam will be unexpectedly difficult or the grade boundaries would be heavily skewed. Fear of the result of a grade can be counter productive to revision which at the same time, it is important that students recognize the importance of thorough preparation.

Research has shown that the optimum attitude to take with regards to revision is one where the student feels positive about their revision. At times of stress and difficulty, this may be difficult to achieve.

It is recommended that students focus on the process of learning and revision rather than the consequences of the grade achieved. It is better to think "I need to be able to answer..." than to think "What will I do if I fail my exam?". Though this is not always easy to do, your ELITE Tutor will support you to do this.

**"It is ironic that I started to score A grades in my past papers the moment I stopped caring what grade I got and focused on not losing marks." - Jack Davy**

ELITE Tuition encourages their students to focus on achieving every single mark in the past papers which requires students to understand both the material of the course and the examination structure of each question.

With the goal of achieving every mark, the ELITE Tutor compliments this work ethic with celebration whenever a student gets a question incorrect. Getting questions incorrect is often demonised and a sign that the revision is not working. This is completely untrue. Provided the student learns from this question and understands fully why they were unable to achieve all of the marks, they have gained valuable experience. Remember, each mark lost now and learnt from is a mark **not** lost in the exam.

## How to revise: Assimilation

Assimilating information is the process to which a student learns new information, such as facts, methods or processes. This requires a different approach to consolidating information which is discussed below.

Learning new information requires the brain to create new neurological connections and with the intensity of revision that students typically do, this can be a very strenuous process.

The human brain consumes over 30% of the energy we get from food and as our cerebral activity (brain activity) increases, so too does our requirement for food. It is tempting to indulge in “brain foods” such as chocolates and other sugary treats. This is a mistake. It is important to eat proper meals and to snack on healthy foods such as fruits.

In addition, forming dendrites (connections in the brain) requires a large amount of water. Having inadequate hydration is often the most common mistake students make. Even students who usually drink the daily recommended allowance will find that requirement increase with the combined effect of learning and revision. Drinking enough water is the miracle substance that makes a student focus, alert and less tired. In addition, adequate hydration keeps all of the other bodily functions operating well which leads to a better immune system, clearer skin and good sleep.

**“Eating well and drinking enough water is critically important to a student when revising.” - Dr Andrew Roberts**

Sleep is very important to students who wish to master their revision and achieve their full potential. Scientists have shown that irregular sleep patterns and long term inadequate sleep can result in a decline of productivity of up to 35%. That means you need an extra 2 hours of revision time for every 6 hours you do to achieve the same amount of learning. Sleep enough and you save those hours. Plus, it’s a more pleasant experience to be well rested.

It is very tempting to take caffeinated drinks to keep more alert when revising. This should be used tactically. Short term use of caffeine leads to greater alertness and concentration. This can have a positive effect on revision. However, if taken consistently over a longer period of time, caffeine can lead to dehydration and irregular sleep patterns. This can have the complete opposite effect on revision. So it is recommended that you limit the intake of caffeine to times when it is tactically useful or compensate use of caffeine with adequate sleep and drinking additional water.



**Michelle Turner (Studies Economics at Warwick)**

Breaks while assimilating information is incredibly important as it is when the brain makes the most new connections. The appropriate ratio of learning to break can vary between people but astonishingly, scientists believe the optimum for learning is 30 minutes of learning with then a 10 minute break. These regular short breaks are a great time to hydrate and fit in a healthy snack.

### **Key Note:**

Making new connections occur whenever you process new information. While you are taking breaks during assimilation of information, you must NOT listen to new music, or watch a new movie or take in new factual information. This will form connections with your learning which is not advisable.

## How to revise: Consolidation

Consolidating information is the process of practicing techniques learnt or ensuring that you have correctly remembered the key facts and identified the key elements of concept. This process is fundamentally considered as an exercise in memory recall but in truth, it is where the brain creates cerebral algorithms to recall the relevant information quickly.

The use of breaks when consolidating information is quite different than when assimilating information. Recalling information and practicing techniques is far less strenuous on the brain than creating many new connections and for that reason, students can work under different conditions.

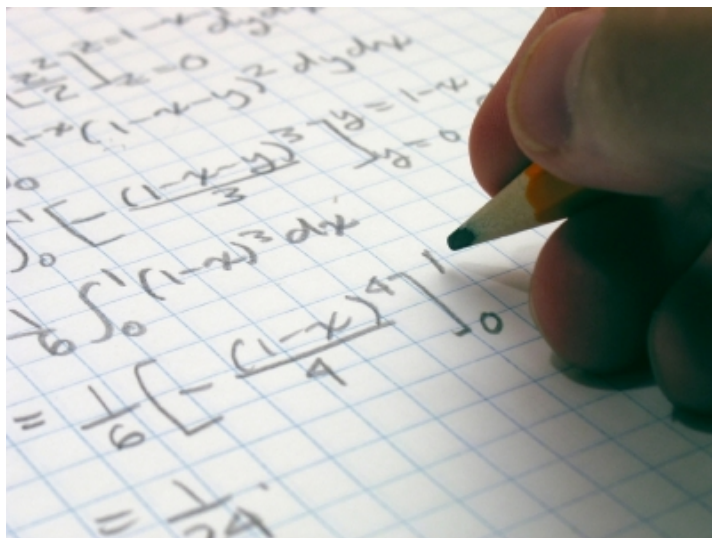
Students can work for much longer without the need for a break. ELITE Tuition recommends that after two complete hours of work, one should take a break. However, many students have been able to work longer than this without needing a break.

During the breaks, it is okay to enjoy new information such as listening to new music, watching part of a new movie or reading the news (or news feed on facebook). It is important however to remember that such breaks are used to rest.

**“I find that I can work for hours doing past papers without needing a break. After a while, it just becomes fun.” - Sukhdeep Singh**

Much of the information above regarding nutrition and adequate hydration and sleep is relevant for this type of revision. Students should still be ensuring they are eating well, drinking enough water and sleeping well to ensure that they are on top mental form. In addition, students find they require less caffeine when consolidating information (provided they are well rested).

Another missing gem is the role of light exercising during revision breaks. Research has shown that in some cases, light exercise enhances revision productivity by increasing blood flow to the brain.



### The ELITE Way to do Past Papers

There are many Do's and Don't's when it comes to doing past papers. The key point to remember that the real exam will have to be sat under exam conditions, without anyone or anything assuring you that you are doing questions correctly. It is best to emulate that as closely as possible.

When doing a past paper:

- 1) Sit the paper under exam conditions. Do not use any study aids or guides to help you.
- 2) Do not mark the paper until you have completed it. It is tempting to look at the mark scheme while you are doing the paper, but this is terrible for developing examination technique.
- 3) Mark the paper harshly. If you are unsure if what you have written should earn the mark, then you probably haven't. But do feel free to check with your ELITE Tutor / School Teacher.
- 4) Make sure you understand why you did not get the marks on the questions which you have done incorrectly. Do you need to revise this topic, or did you simply not spot the trick.
- 5) Place a Post-It note on each question you still do not understand for your ELITE Tutor. Go through how to do these questions and make sure you know how to get EVERY SINGLE MARK.



## Objective (Goal) Orientated Revision

Professional project managers believe that working without a measurable goal is like rock climbing without a rope. The same is true with revision. The single most important question a student must ask themselves whenever they are revising a particular topic is “How do I know I can do this?”. More specifically, which questions will I be able to answer having revised this topic. It is strongly advised that students select questions that they plan to answer in advance of revising a particular topic. This keeps revision relevant and prevents students from following unnecessary tangents. In addition, it allows students to allocate the appropriate amount of time given it's importance. It is tempting to use past papers to act as the appropriate test questions to ensure a student has gained the necessary knowledge and skills, however this should be avoided when possible. Textbook questions or other exam type material serves just as well and allows you to use more past papers as authentic tests to develop exam technique.

For Mathematics specifically, your ELITE tutor will be able to provide you with ample examination style questions on each topic and highlight the specific ways in which examiners structure questions.

It is also strongly recommended that students invest time cataloguing the specific ways in which examiners link various topics together and identify triggers. For instance, if a question has asked you to calculate a length and a distance, it may then ask you to calculate an area. This is particularly true if the angle is a right angle. These specific keys are explained in detail by the ELITE tutor however we insist that students invest time to identify these connections as well. The positive effect is that students are able to quickly identify these in the exam which not only eases the pressure and anxiety of the exam, but also allows students to identify how the marks are distributed for that question. It is almost as useful as having a teacher by your side.



“A common trait amongst successful students achieving the A\* grade is the ability to recognise how the question will test them and prepare accordingly.” - Mr Rajesh Patel (Maths Teacher)

# Top Tips from Previous Successful Students



“It’s very tempting to eat lots of junk food when revising. You always promise to burn off the excess calories over the summer holidays but no one really does that. I discovered lots of delicious things to snack on that were great. My favourite is carrots and celery with low fat humus. If you feel like an extra kick, add spices to the mix. Also, it’s great to drink something sweet with this and I find fruit juices go great with this snack.” - Michael Page



“Regardless of what everyone says, I’ve gotten used to have a RedBull when I revise and it helps me revise til late. I started to become aware of the lack of sleep I was getting and the bags under my eyes. So since I didn’t want to give it up, I simply limited myself to drinking it before 4pm. Then I wouldn’t have anymore. Still, those who are able to, try having an apple in the morning. It wakes you up better than any caffeine drink.” - Janakan Siva



“Don’t let all the work get to you. I looked at the notes I did for my A-Levels and thought, I bet I could actually suffocate under all that. Ironically, while I was revising, I simply just got on with it. I had a plan, I had a revision timetable and worked. Before long I was making files, storing old files and then did all of the papers under God’s green earth. Imagine if instead, I wasted time worrying about how much I had to do.” - Erica Langsam




“Beware of Facebook and Twitter! Teachers will tell you til their blue in their face that you shouldn’t be on Facebook when revising, but that’s about as likely to happen as them climbing into your seat and sitting the exam for you. So practical advice: Only use Facebook / chat services at the beginning and end of the day. Tell your friends that you’ll only check your phones then too. If people urgently need you, they can call the home phone.” - George Wright



“Really hold onto what you’re looking forward to in the summer. Whether it’s a beach holiday with your friends or just having weeks off with nothing to do but rest and catch up with movies, keep that in mind when the revision becomes tough and it’s hard to keep motivated. It’s shocking how fast the revision period goes and before the end, you’ll wish you had more time. Make the most of it!” - Ben Fox





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