

Free Report

The Best Way To Prepare For A Maths Exam

By Jeevan Singh

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Who Am I?

I am Jeevan Singh; an author and maths specialist. I've studied mathematics for the best part of my life; from KS1 (age 5) right up to degree level (age 21). In June 2013, I graduated with a mathematics degree from a top university – Kings College, London. Now, my main objective is to help younger students achieve their maximum potential in this subject. For some people that might mean achieving a 'C' grade in the foundation paper. For others, anything other than an A or A* would be considered a failure!

In this report, I'll be showing you revision techniques that have worked for me. Using them I have managed to achieve top grades. When I was young I formulated a unique approach to revision. This 'system' evolved almost by accident as I moved through my school studies. I know what works and what doesn't – I've learnt the hard way and have got the results to prove it. The great thing about my approach is that it allowed me to ace my exams whilst doing the things I enjoyed, such as playing playstation, watching TV or hanging out with friends.

As mentioned, I've put my unique study/revision system to good use several times, from KS2 right up to KS5 (A-Levels). Here are the results of each of those qualifications:

Qualification	Grade
KS2 (year 6)	6
KS3 (year 9)	8
KS4 (GCSE)	A*
KS5 (A-Level)	A*

Figure 1: Jeevan Singh's Results

As you can see I've got a pretty good record – all thanks to the method(s) I've adopted to help me study effectively. I'm going to share some of these methods with you very shortly. It is really great knowing that you can pass your maths exam and achieve your target grade whilst still having the time to enjoy the things you love...

“People say that you shouldn’t cut corners in life. You should operate in the ‘right’ way. But who said cutting corners is a bad thing. If it gets you to where you want, with the results you expect, then why not? Whenever I approach an exam, I think to myself: ‘how can I achieve this in this most efficient way possible’. This is the first question that should cross your mind before you even begin revision. Once you’ve done that, then you should think about your strategy – how you’re going to achieve whatever it is you want to achieve. If you approach it in this way, you can be sure to free up time to do things you love the most. Not only that, but you’ll come to enjoy revision too.” - Jeevan Singh

At the end of the day it’s all about finding out what works and then using that information to achieve your target grade in the quickest and easiest way possible. In that respect, I’ve done all the hard work for you and documented the best approach to adopt when studying & revising for your maths exam – all you have to do is apply it.

How The Brain Works

The main purpose of this report is to reveal the best way in which to prepare for your maths exam, but before we do that, let's explore how the brain actually works. Remember the brain is the most powerful organ of the body. It controls our entire body and defines who we are as human beings. It's important to understand the basics on how it works.

There are 3 important ways of learning: Visual, Verbal & Rote. You should not focus on one form in particular, but rather have a good balance of all three. The first two forms: visual and verbal tap into different parts of the brain. The main part of the brain is called the Cerebrum. This is what causes an individual to think and act. The cerebrum itself is divided into four sections, called 'lobes'. Refer to the image below:

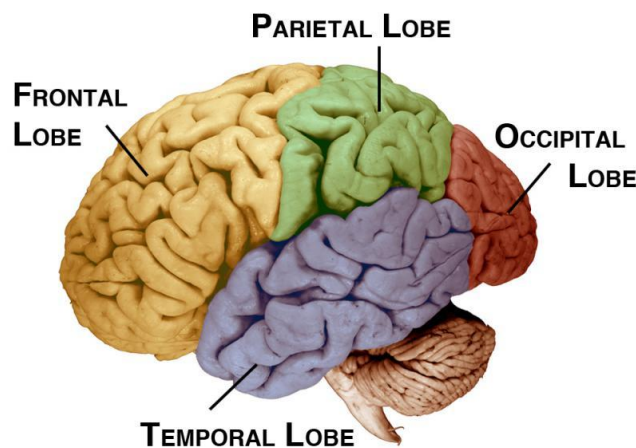


Figure 2: The Brain

The Occipital Lobe is where the visual processing takes place. Whenever an individual sees something, the brain interprets it; the shape and colour and then, attempts to store it.

The Temporal Lobe is where auditory perception takes place, or in other words, verbal learning. As a matter of fact, this 'lobe' is where memory is stored too. Remember a large part of any exam, let alone maths, is based on how much content you can remember. Thus, memory retention is vital when preparing for an upcoming maths exam.

When the brain recollects a memory, it looks for neurons (cells which hold information) that's associated with it. Then it connects all these neurons to complete the whole memory. It is like a jigsaw puzzle: fitting the pieces (neurons) together to create the whole picture (memory).

For example, suppose you are trying to solve a problem on percentages; what the brain will do is look for neurons such as:

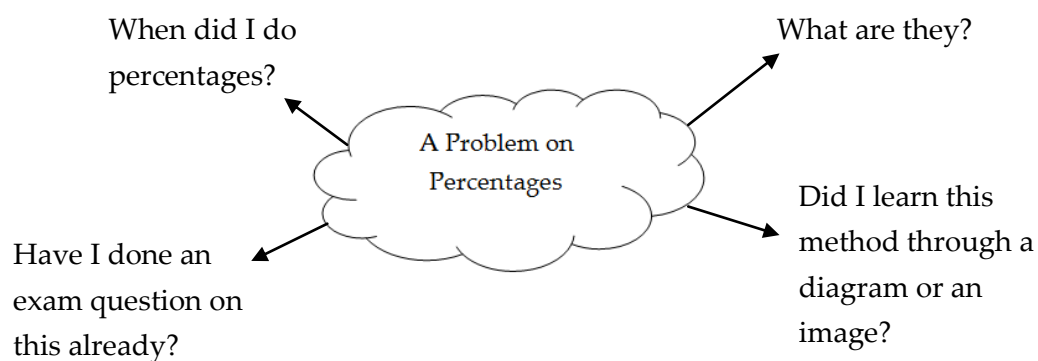


Figure 3: How the brain works

Once the brain has retrieved all of these neurons, the student will understand the problem and proceed to solve it. This is basically how the brain operates. When the brain thinks about a particular scenario, it looks for anything that's associated with it. For instance, if you recall a recent event that you attended, you can remember things such as the purpose of the event, who attended, what you talked about etc. That's why it's important not to stick to just one learning style; use all of them in order to maximise retention.

The learning style known as rote learning is simply learning through constructive repetition; hammering-it-home until it's retained in your memory banks. This is the same approach followed by the smartest civilisations of our world today: China and Singapore. You will discover later on, how we can include rote-learning in our revision schedule.

Self-Learning

Schools are there to help you with maths. However, you should always adopt a level of self-learning as well in order to consolidate your knowledge. Self-learning just simply means self-taught from a particular resource. This resource could be a textbook or an online website. Self-learning, although a lengthier process, is the most beneficial learning tool for many reasons:

1. It increases independent (critical) thinking. Critical thinking is an important skill to develop, especially when trying to overcome maths problems.
2. Students develop responsibility. For example, learning to complete a task by a set time.
3. Students can learn at their own pace, without any 'restriction' from a teachers lesson.
4. Student develops a good work-ethic.
5. Self-satisfaction is gained through learning a new concept on your own as opposed to a teacher explaining it to you.
6. More theory is retained when self-learnt instead of parents 'spoon feeding' information to you.
7. An increased likelihood of reaching ones potential.
8. Students are better prepared for higher education when their background has an element of independent learning.
9. There are alternative ways of learning as opposed to the fixed learning methods of schools.
10. The student can take their learning-experience as far as they want it to go.

The Numeracy Rate In The UK

In 2009, the programme of international student assessment (PISA) ranked UK in 28th in the worldwide numeracy rate. There was a slight improvement in 2012, when the UK climbed up to 26th position (see Appendix A) but we're still very far behind the top performing countries such as China and Singapore. In fact, according to research, by the time an English pupil reaches the age of 16, they are already 2 years behind their Chinese counterpart.

The numeracy level of our population is very critical to the economy. Numeracy skills are required in most areas of work, particularly in the highest paid professions. Eric Schmidt, Google's chairman, recently said that Britain are at risk of becoming a 'dusty museum of the past' if it does not address the current mathematical decline.

Here are some interesting facts and figures, taken from the BIS Skills for life survey 2011, about the numeracy rate in the UK:

- ❖ In 2011, only 22% of the working-age population in England (7.5 million adults) passed their GCSE Maths (Grades A* - C)
- ❖ In 2011, 42% of pupils in England failed to achieve a GCSE A*-C grade in mathematics. "Many of those who scrape a pass at Grade C are still incapable of truly understanding how to calculate percentages and fractions or to interpret data."
- ❖ 17 million adults in England (fewer than half the working-age population) have a maths level equivalent to a primary school student.
- ❖ Adults with poor numeracy are twice as likely to be unemployed than those who are competent.
- ❖ The annual cost to the public purse of children failing to master basic numeracy skills in primary schools is £2.4bn
- ❖ Every year more than 30,000 children leave primary school at 11 with the mathematical skills of a seven-year-old

What is being done?

Experts say that students are not being challenged enough from a young age. If students are pushed from the outset, they are likely to develop stronger mathematical skills at a faster rate. In response to this, the government are replacing the current curriculum set in primary schools. The department of education wants students to know their 12 times-table by the age of seven and have a solid foundation in basic mathematical operations such as addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

The lack of interest in studying maths is also a concern. Many students find maths 'boring' and fail to recognise the underlying importance of it in everyday life. Less than 20% of students go on to study maths post-16. The Norfolk MP, Elizabeth Truss, believes studying mathematics up to the age of 18 should be compulsory. She claims that the majority of students in countries such as Korea and Japan study maths up to 18 years of age, and England should follow suit if it wants to keep up with these countries.

In response, the government are releasing new maths qualifications in 2015, known as the 'core' maths program. These qualifications are aimed at 16-18 year olds to encourage young adults to study maths, beyond 16, and equip them with the right skills necessary to compete for the higher-paid jobs. It will suit students who achieve a grade 'C' or 'B' at GCSE maths – around 50% of students every year. These students miss out on a top grade and thus, are unsuitable to study A-Level maths. The government are going to spend £20 million over the next two years to support schools and colleges in providing these extra courses.

It has recently been confirmed that as of September 2015, students will study maths until the age of 18. Students who fail maths will continue to study it until they pass. Students who achieve an average 'C' or 'B' grade will be placed on a 'core' maths program mentioned above and the highest attaining students will study A-level maths.

Changes To The Curriculum

From September 2015, the GCSE maths curriculum will change somewhat. Firstly, when students see their GCSE Maths and English results in August 2017, they will not see the standard letter grades from A* - G. Instead, they will see number grades from 1- 9, with 9 being the highest.

However, if you take the number of letter grades (8) and number grades (9) you can see there is not a one-to-one mapping of the grades. You should view the highest number grade, 9, as equivalent to an A**. With this additional grade, there is now a direct mapping between the letter grades and number grades and this is probably the easiest way to draw comparisons.

For a more detailed analysis of the new grading system, you may want to see this video by Dale Bassett, AQA's head of public policy:

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/supporting-education/news/new-gcse-grades-explained>.

So how does this affect you? Well a grade 5 is equivalent to a respectable pass grade. This is what employers will go by when assessing job applicants.

Number grades to letter grades:

9 – A**
8 – A*
7 – A
6 – B
5 – C
4 – D
3 – E
2 – F
1 – G

Figure 4: New GCSE grading system

With the inclusion of an A** grade, this means the specification will also change to include more challenging topics. To find all the changes, Google: '(your exam board) gcse maths new spec 2015'.

The new specifications will follow the same two-tier system as before: foundation and higher. The foundation-tier paper will range from grades 1 – 5 and the higher-tier paper will range from grades 4 – 9. Both tiers will consist of three papers; 1 non-calculator and 2 calculator-allowed. Each paper will carry 80 marks and last for 1 ½ hours long. In total, there will be 4 and ½ hours of testing.

On the next page, I've provided a summary of all the changes to the content of the syllabuses (taken from the Edexcel board). Please note that these changes may not apply to all exam boards so you're advised to carry out your own research...

New topics in both tiers

- ❖ Use inequality notation to specify simple error intervals
- ❖ Identify and interpret roots, intercepts, turning points of quadratic functions graphically; deduce roots algebraically
- ❖ Fibonacci type sequences, quadratic sequences, geometric progressions
- ❖ Relate ratios to linear functions
- ❖ Interpret the gradient of a straight line graph as a rate of change
- ❖ Know the exact values of $\sin \theta$ and $\cos \theta$ for $\theta = 0^\circ, 30^\circ, 45^\circ, 60^\circ$ and 90° ; know the exact value of $\tan \theta$ for $\theta = 0^\circ, 30^\circ, 45^\circ$ and 60°

New topics in the foundation-tier (previously higher-tier only)

- ❖ Index laws: zero and negative powers (numeric and algebraic)
- ❖ Standard form
- ❖ Compound interest and reverse percentages
- ❖ Direct and indirect proportion (numeric and algebraic)
- ❖ Expand the product of two linear expressions
- ❖ Factorise quadratic expressions in the form $x^2 + bx + c$
- ❖ Solve linear simultaneous equations
- ❖ Solve quadratic equations by factorisation
- ❖ Plot cubic and reciprocal graphs, recognise quadratic and cubic graphs
- ❖ Trigonometric ratios in 2D right-angled triangles
- ❖ Fractional scale enlargements in transformations
- ❖ Lengths of arcs and areas of sectors of circles
- ❖ Mensuration problems
- ❖ Vectors (except geometric problems/proofs)
- ❖ Density
- ❖ Tree diagrams

New topics in the higher-tier

- ❖ Expand the products of more than two binomials
- ❖ Interpret the reverse process as the 'inverse function'; interpret the succession of two functions as a 'composite function' (using formal function notation)
- ❖ Deduce turning points by completing the square
- ❖ Calculate or estimate gradients of graphs and areas under graphs, and interpret results in real-life cases (not including calculus)
- ❖ Simple geometric progressions including surds, and other sequences
- ❖ Deduce expressions to calculate the n th term of quadratic sequences
- ❖ Calculate and interpret conditional probabilities through Venn diagrams

Visual Learning

A great way of learning maths concepts is by visual learning. Visual learning basically means learning by looking at the subject matter you are trying to improve in. Research shows that students learn in a number of different ways; verbal, written, visual, etc. AEL, a US education research body, concluded after 29 studies that visual learning improves student performance in the following areas:

- Critical Thinking
- Retention
- Comprehension
- Organisation

I myself have seen, first hand, the benefits of visual learning amongst students. So what is the best way to learn through visual learning?

The best approach is to pick an area of maths that you're struggling at. Alternatively, it could be an area you want to learn in order to prepare for an upcoming exam. For example; let's say you want to learn percentages. The best way to tackle this is to pick 2, 3 or 4 concepts from percentages. This could be something like the following:

- 1) Percentage increase
- 2) Percentage decrease
- 3) Simple Interest

Now all you need to do is write up the concepts on an A1 size sheet and put it up on a wall. Be sure to put it up where it will be seen every day. The key here is to ensure that the sheet is looked at every day, at least several times. Every time you walk past the sheet, look at each concept and verbally read it and absorb the principles. I would also advise a couple of simple related questions are worked through each time the sheet is looked at.

If you want, you can create more than one sheet to cover different areas of maths. I would recommend you don't have more than 4 concepts on each sheet. Feel free to use colours in order to highlight key points. Also vary the size of your writing for emphasis.

I use a product called a magic whiteboard which is a roll of disposable whiteboards. You can tear an A1 sheet off the roll and stick it to the wall – it sticks to virtually anything and doesn't leave any marks. It acts as a whiteboard and you can re-use it

as many times as you want. You can purchase a roll of 25 sheets from [Amazon](#) for under £30.

The whiteboard is divided into three sections, each with a title, an example, and a solution.

Percentage Increase
Example: A t-shirt costs £8 before VAT. Given that VAT is 20%, how much is the t-shirt after VAT?
Solution:
 $100\% \rightarrow £8$
 $\div 5 \downarrow$
 $20\% \rightarrow £1.60$
 $£8 + £1.60 (20\%) = \underline{\underline{£9.60}}$

Percentage Decrease
Example: A pair of jeans cost £25. During a sale, the cost of the jeans falls by 20%. What is the price of the jeans during the sale?
Solution:
 $100\% \rightarrow £25$
 $\div 5 \downarrow$
 $20\% \rightarrow £5$
 $£25 - £5 (20\%) = \underline{\underline{£20}}$

Calculating Interest
Example: Robert asks his friend, George, to lend him some money. George lends him £50 and charges 15% interest. How much money does George get back in total?
Solution:
 $100\% \rightarrow £50$
 $\div 10 \downarrow$
 $10\% \rightarrow £5$
 $\div 2 \downarrow$
 $5\% \rightarrow £2.50$
 $15\% = £5 + £2.50 = £7.50$
 $£50 + £7.50 (15\%) = \underline{\underline{£57.50}}$

Figure 5: Make use of a whiteboard to aid visual learning

This is a great way to learn and can make the learning process more effective. Just be sure the concepts sheet gets looked at several times a day; morning and evening is usually the best times. Once you feel satisfied that the subject matter has been mastered, remove the sheet & transfer the details to your notes page for future reference. At this point it's a good idea to put up a new whiteboard (sheet) detailing another area you wish to improve in.

Verbal Learning

Most students don't like the thought of sitting down and writing down answers to tricky maths questions. So whenever you can learn maths in a different 'format', it aids the learning process. This is where verbal learning comes in.

Students who don't like to do repetitive math problems may very well see verbal problems as a bit of a challenge. This helps create interest and turns maths (considered to be boring) into a game. I have had first-hand experience of this when tutoring. By removing the handwriting element from math problems it enables the students mind to focus on the fundamentals. This results in a slow but steady improvement in mental maths skills – an important foundation required to master maths.

Verbal learning is also a very efficient method of learning which goes 'unnoticed' and is relatively 'painless'. This approach involves creating questions and solving them through the spoken word. You give a set of maths problems to a friend/family member and ask them to test you. The beauty of this method is that questions can be made up anytime, anywhere. You could, very easily, turn a 30 minute ride to the local shops into a 30 minute maths lesson!

The kind of questions that they ask you should be constructed on the subject area you need more work on. For instance, let's suppose that you're struggling with fractions. What you want to do is focus on verbal fractions questions until you feel that a certain degree of proficiency has been attained. The idea is to start with easy questions and slowly increase the difficulty.

For example: you could construct your verbal learning program as follows:

- 1) Week 1: Basic Fractions
- 2) Week 2: Adding/Subtracting Fractions
- 3) Week 3: Multiplying/Dividing Fractions
- 4) Week 4: Simplifying Fractions

This is obviously a very simple example but I hope you get the idea. Remember, to only increase the difficulty of your verbal questioning based on your progress.

Another time to use verbal questioning is when revising for exams. You can use it just days prior to your real exam. Give sample questions or your notes pages to a friend or family member and ask them to test you. Then, review your answers/notes to see if you were correct.

If a question is too detailed to answer verbally, just say the overall process of solving that problem out loud. That way, you are acknowledging the overall-method. Remember, maths is a methodical subject and solutions to problems are given in a step-by-step procedure so it's vital to memorise the key methods.

In sum, verbal learning is a great method to incorporate into your revision plan. It is quick, easy and very effective.

Rote Learning

Once you've grasped a certain concept in maths, the next step is to hammer it home. I have given you two very effective methods already (visual & verbal learning) to help consolidate your knowledge. However, practise is a key ingredient to ensure complete readiness for an exam or test. What do I mean by practise?

Let's suppose, for example, you're struggling with fractions. Firstly, you would use visual and verbal learning to help you gain a basic understanding of the concepts. Then, you would test yourself further by answering some simple written questions on fractions. You will continue this until you have a reasonable understanding of the topic. Then, you can move onto the 'Rote Learning' phase.

The next step is to divide the area of fractions into separate components. For example we could create the following topics:

1. Fraction – The Basics
2. Fractions Addition
3. Fractions Subtraction
4. Fractions Division
5. Fractions Multiplication
6. Simplifying Fractions
7. Converting Fractions

Now you should tackle a minimum of 50 fraction questions relating to each group. You can create these questions yourself (takes much longer) or use pre-made worksheets. You can find a number of worksheets from textbooks or revision guides; just pop-in to your local bookstore (WHSmith or Waterstones) and pick one up. You should be able to find a workbook for under a fiver. Alternatively, you can find worksheets online. Simply Google 'maths worksheets' and you can potentially have access to hundreds of questions.

You should aim for a score of 90%, at worst, for each set of worksheets. If any worksheet scores less than 90% then you should generate another 50 questions. Repeat this process until you get that 90% minimum score.

If an exam is coming up, make sure you also add past paper questions to that load. This will help you to understand the theory in an exam context.

This technique I have highlighted is a very powerful way of teaching maths. Intense practise helps to reinforce the subject being studied.

If you want to save yourself a lot of time digging up the right questions, I would highly recommend my GCSE Maths 4 week program. In there, you will find dozen's of carefully selected exam questions you can work on. Over the past couple of years, I have trawled through lots of past papers and picked out questions that appear most frequently. By focusing on these questions in particular, you are guaranteed to boost your GCSE maths grade. It's also suitable for the new UK specification (9-1) released in September 2015.

The Best Way To Prepare For A Maths Exam

It can be difficult drawing up a revision schedule prior to an exam. Many questions arise: Shall I read over the syllabus and make notes? Do I need to write brief notes or detailed ones? How many times do I need to read over a topic to make sure I fully understand it? When shall I begin past papers? The most important thing to remember here is whatever revision plan that you decide on, you must stick by it. You cannot create a revision plan and not commit to it.

A good starting point is to collect all the resources that you're going to be using for the next couple of months. By resources, I mean a good revision guide and as many past papers that you can get hold of. You're probably wondering why so many past papers? But I'll explain why in a few minutes.

Once you've done this, structure your revision so you can get through all of the material you've compiled. For instance, your revision guide is made up of 4 chapters and you have access to 10 past papers. If your exam is in six weeks time, a reasonable plan would be to study a chapter a week and in the final two weeks, work through the exam papers. Also, a chapter a week will be sub-divided into smaller sections or a certain number of pages a day.

You must ensure that your revision schedule is realistic. You do not want to be doing too much or too little per day. If you set yourself too much work to do in a day, the chances are you will procrastinate and end up doing very little. Then, you will have to re-think your strategy to make it more feasible. That is why it's best to begin your revision schedule a little earlier. Give yourself extra time so you can progress at a steady rate. If you do this, you will be able to free up time for other things besides working around-the-clock.

The way I would approach it is to break up the revision schedule as suggested above. You could aim to master a new concept every day. This is a good strategy because you're not bombarding yourself with work. You are only doing enough to master one new concept a day. A typical day of revision would entail:

- 1) Absorb the theory by reading the revision guide and make very brief notes.
- 2) Attempt questions, provided by the revision guide, to see how you can apply this theory. If the revision guide contains exam-style questions, pay particular attention to these. Exam-style questions are a LOT different to standard maths problems. Get a feel for the nature of them now.

- 3) At the end of the day, write up a summary of what you learnt on that day. What were the most important bits? Try to do this off the top of your head. If you missed anything out, briefly scan over your work that you completed today.

Once you've read through the revision guide, it's time to begin those past papers. Before you attempt the first one, quickly read over your notes page for some last-minute revision. By this time, you should have a notes page, listing the most important concepts/formulas that you learnt over the past couple of months.

Then, complete each past paper under exam conditions. Don't use any resources here. In the actual exam, you won't have access to any resources so get into the habit now. Don't be disheartened if you don't do as well as you hoped in the first practise paper. This grade will bump up with each new practise paper you complete. This is because you'll pick up new concepts/ideas as you go along.

It's important to save all your exam papers until the last minute. You want to be in that 'exam-mode' just prior to an exam. This means completing exam papers over and over again. This is where rote-learning comes into play. What you'll notice is maths papers, in particular, follow the same format every year. The only difference is the values of the questions. Therefore, if you complete past papers repeatedly, you will store these key methods into your memory banks and be sure to achieve a top mark in the real thing.

Take a note of your weaknesses as you go along. These are the questions you get frequently wrong. Make sure you work on these weaknesses from time to time. Tackle extra questions in these areas until you're comfortable with it. This is very important because this is what determines whether you'll achieve a 'C' grade or a 'D' grade (foundation paper) or 'A' grade as opposed to an 'A*' grade (higher tier).

Creating your revision schedule can be a difficult process. Firstly, you have to spend time identifying the right resource (revision guide) you're going to use. Then, you have to dig up as many past papers as you can. Once you have all these resources, you have to allocate them accordingly to ensure you get through all of them by the date of your exam. To save all this time, you can use my ready-made revision schedule from my GCSE maths revision program. Hundreds of student's in the UK have boosted their maths grades dramatically, simply by following this routine. You will also find my small rule of thumb which will allow you to free up 50% of your time so you can enjoy doing other things too.

More Tips & Advice

Here are some more tips to take on board whilst revising:

1. **Get enough sleep** - Never sacrifice sleep during revision. Memory retention is stronger after a good night's sleep and it's easy to access certain information or, as I mentioned earlier, neurons. Therefore, make sure you get yourself enough sleep so you feel fully refreshed and ready to begin a new day of revision.
2. **Sleep on it** – You've probably heard of this saying many times before but it actually works. As you're already aware, the brain never 'sleeps' – it churns away at 'digesting' the information you've put in front of it when you are sleeping. That's why I recommend that you should revise your notes just before going to bed. Let those important concepts flow through your mind until you drift off to sleep. Then, let your brain do the rest.
3. **Eating healthy** - It is tempting to indulge in some junk food such as chocolates, crisps etc. during revision. Revision can become tedious, at times, and students may turn to fatty foods as a way of controlling their emotions. But this is where you need to bite the bullet. Eating this type of food may give you a short-term 'buzz' but it does not benefit your revision in any way possible. If anything, it hampers your progress. Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated. Fruit and vegetables are proven to boost brain power. Do not consume animal products or keep them down to a minimum, if you have to.
4. **Take lots of breaks** - Make sure you don't revise around-the-clock. There's a risk of burning out. This can have repercussions on your revision. After some time, your concentration levels will drop and information will stop sinking in. I like to do revision in short bursts; revise for 1 or 2 hours, take an hour break, revise for another 1 or 2 hours, take another break and so on. Whenever you feel mentally drained, this is when you should take a break. Stop revising and take part in a total different activity.
5. **Exercise** - Revision can be stressful at times. A way to counteract this stress is to take part in some physical activity. All it takes is around half an hour a day. Try to fit this into your schedule. When you exercise, a hormone is released into the body called endorphins which gives you a lift. Also, a recent study

carried out by Angela Balding, found that students that exercised at least three times a week were more likely to get good scores in examinations. This is the first time a clear link has been established between sporting activity and academic success. You can read the full report here:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-18367/Exercise-boosts-exam-results.html>

6. **Motivation** - Your motivation levels in the run up to your exam will determine how well you perform, in the end. Motivation is what drives you to work. Students are motivated in different ways. Having a well-structured revision schedule is a good start. By knowing what you are going to do a day in advance will sustain motivation levels. This is because you are well aware of what you need to do on a particular day. Students without a revision plan tend to lose track. This is when motivation drops and revision is not as effective. Draw-up a feasible plan and make sure you stick to it. You may need to adjust it at the beginning so it meets your needs. Other techniques I use to boost motivation are: listening to an inspirational song, watching an inspirational video or visualizing the exam certificate in your mind. Imagine the euphoria you would get if you received this in the post (with your name printed on there of course):

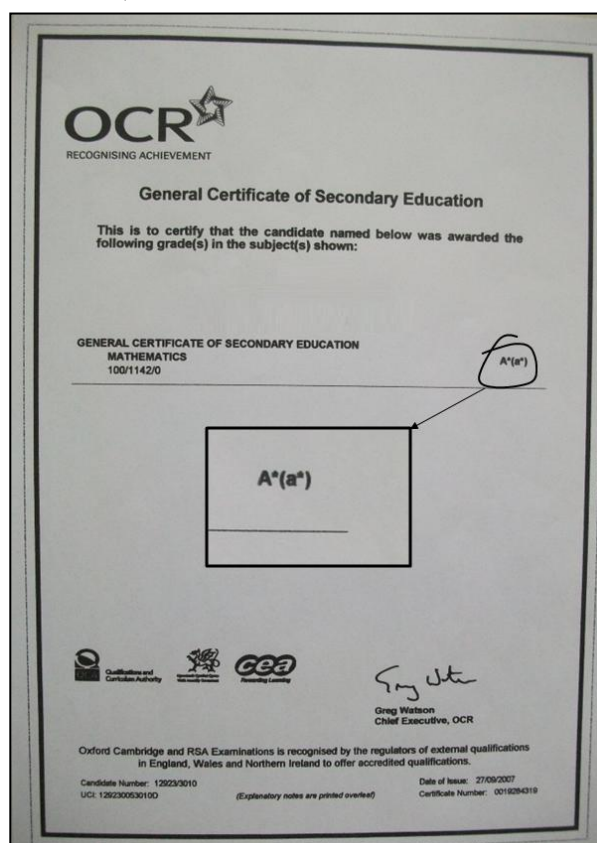


Figure 6: A* Certificate

Appendix A – UK Bottom of Maths League

Rank	Country	Score
1	Shanghai, China	613
2	Singapore	573
3	Hong Kong, China	561
4	Chinese Taipei	560
5	Korea	554
6	Macao - China	538
7	Japan	536
8	Liechtenstein	535
9	Switzerland	531
10	Netherlands	523
11	Estonia	521
12	Finland	519
13	Canada	518
14	Poland	518
15	Belgium	515
16	Germany	514
17	Vietnam	511
18	Austria	506
19	Australia	504
20	Ireland	501
21	Slovenia	501
22	Denmark	500
23	New Zealand	500
24	Czech Republic	499
25	France	495
26	UK	494
27	Iceland	493
28	Latvia	491
29	Luxembourg	490
30	Norway	489

Figure 7: The 2012 PISA rankings of the first 30 countries. UK lies in 26th position.

