



Louth Academy

Parents' Guide to GCSE Examinations

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The months leading up to your child's GCSE exams are a crucial time. The grades your child achieves will secure a foundation for their next steps in life and you will want your child to achieve the best grades that they can; this can be made possible when there is a good partnership between student, school and parent.

One of the hardest demands on your child is that of understanding the long-term importance of doing the best they can – and learning to shelve short-term fun (at times) in the interest of long-term benefits. Children will also differ in their levels of maturity, their ability to take responsibility for their learning, organisational skills and levels of motivation. This is where parents can help. Your support, encouragement and interest can make a spectacular difference to your child's motivation and ability to cope with the academic and organisational demands of the exam period.

Understanding the GCSE Grading System:

There has been a change in the awarding of grades. Instead of being graded with A*, A, B, C, D, E, F or G, the GCSE papers are now given a 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 or 1 grading. The highest three grades (9, 8 and 7) are replacements for A* and A, with the top 20% of those being graded 9 – creating a 'gold standard' grade.

New GCSE Grades										
U	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
U	G	F	E	D	C	B	A		A*	
Old GCSE Grades										

What is an Examination Board?

An examination board is an organisation that is responsible for setting GCSE examinations, marking them and distributing results to students. Our Academy uses the following exam boards for GCSE subjects:

GCSE Subject:	Examination Board:
Art and Design	AQA
Biology	OCR
Business Studies	AQA
Chemistry	OCR
Creative Studies	NCFE
English Language	AQA
English Literature	AQA
Food Preparation and Nutrition	OCR
French	AQA
Geography	AQA
German	AQA
History	AQA
i-Media	OCR

Mathematics	Edexcel
Music (BTEC)	Edexcel
Performing Arts (BTEC)	Edexcel
Physical Education (BTEC)	Edexcel
Physics	OCR
Religious Education	Eduqas
Science	OCR
Spanish	AQA
Technology	AQA

When should GCSE revision start?

GCSE revision should be taking place throughout the duration of Key Stage 4, as many topics / skills are taught from Year 9 onwards. Students should certainly begin concentrated revision at the beginning of Year 11.

When do 2019 GCSE examinations begin?

The examination boards have stated that provisional dates for the summer GCSE examination period runs from **Monday 13 May 2019** to **Monday 17 June 2019**.

Students studying French, German and Spanish will be involved in speaking examinations at the beginning of May.

Other Non-Examined Assessments in subjects such as Art and Design, Food Preparation and Nutrition, i-Media, Performing Arts, Physical Education and Technology have deadlines well before the commencement of the GCSE examinations.

GCSE results are released on **Thursday 22 August 2019**.

PARENTAL IMPACT:

What Difference Can a Parent Make?

You do not have to be an expert in any of the subjects your child has chosen to take at GCSE; you just need to know how to best spend the time you do have to support and prepare your child. You are the expert on your own child and always have been their most important teacher, so your active support and encouragement can make a big difference to your child's motivation in facing their GCSE examinations.

Your role may include some or all of the following:

- **Attendance Officer:** Making sure your child attends school on time every day and understands the importance of making the most of lesson time. Government statistics show that there is a direct link between attendance, punctuality and results in GCSEs. Every day lost in attendance reduces your child's chance of achieving their best.
- **Partner with school and child:** Going to parents' evenings, asking questions and finding out how you can best help your child at home.
- **Provider of the tools for homework and revision:** A quiet space for study, pens, paper and other necessities.
- **'Study Buddy':** Showing an interest in the subjects; helping with the homework (but not doing it for them); testing them when they ask you.
- **Adviser:** Helping your child to break tasks down so that they are manageable; keeping a subtle eye on progress and celebrating achievements. You will be able to see a positive way forward when things go wrong.

- **Project Manager:** Agreeing the rules for homework or revision; helping them to make a realistic timetable; creating a study / life balance and reviewing the plans as necessary.
- **Go-between:** Liaising between your child and school when necessary, making sure problems are addressed quickly. Contact Curriculum Leaders for certain subjects for specific subject-related queries or your child's Pastoral Manager if you need to discuss general issues.
- **Information Provider:** Helping your child find copies of past exam papers, searching out websites/apps/revision books – generally assisting your child find out about the subject, exam structures and content.

Revision Tips for Parents:

- Help your child to make a study / revision timetable which includes the dates and times of the examinations in May and June as well as dates of any Controlled Assessments / Language speaking examinations / unit tests.
- The timetable should be used to plan revision sessions. These should be spread out evenly so that your son / daughter is not planning to do too much all at once.
- Have the timetable displayed in their room and help them to stick to the plan.
- Ask to see your son / daughter's revision notes and make sure that they speak to their teachers if they are missing any.
- Encourage your son / daughter to ask for help at school on any work that they do not understand.
- Encourage your child to attend all revision sessions offered by the school. These may include lunch sessions, after-school revision, Saturday sessions, holiday sessions – particularly those in Easter and May half-term sessions.
- Make sure that they have all the books they need to hand to avoid wasted time.
- You can buy revision guides to help with study. Make sure that your child knows which exam board and syllabus they have been following for each subject.
- Make sure that their study area is quiet and well-lit.
- Check how they are doing by asking them to explain to you something that they have just revised.

REVISION TECHNIQUES:

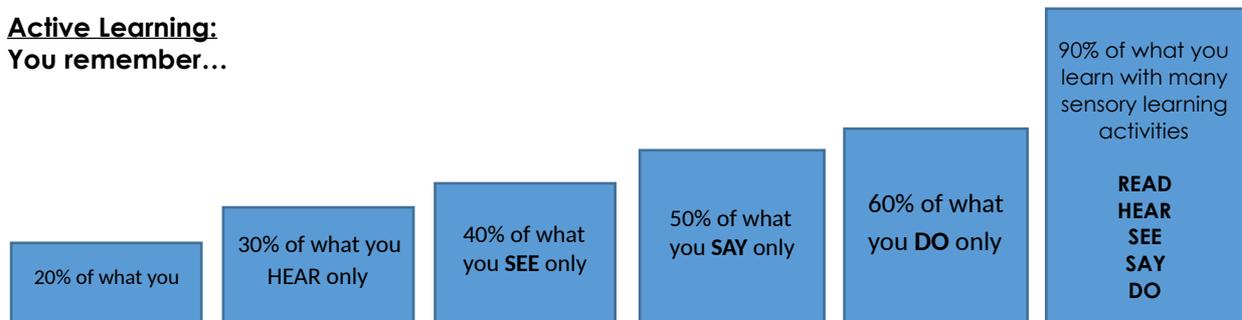
What Revision Techniques Are There?

Reading text over and over until you remember it may not be very effective unless it is supported by other techniques - for example:

Visual:	Auditory:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make notes on key ideas. • Summarise notes on card. • Highlight key information. • Construct minds maps. • Write notes on 'post-its' and stick in prominent places. • Watch revision videos from the internet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make up rhymes or mnemonics (e.g. Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain – colours of the spectrum; Never Eat Shredded Wheat – points on a compass). • Test yourself, or test friends. • Get someone to test you. • Teach someone what you have revised (this could be a good parent/child activity). • Record key information and play it over and over again.
Past Papers:	Kinaesthetic:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Download past papers and write down your answers on lined paper. • Mark your answers using the downloadable mark scheme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create revision cards/flash cards. • Create mind maps / knowledge organisers. • Draw and label diagrams. • Use gestures to demonstrate concepts.
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Active Learning:
You remember...



What Else Can You Do?

- Recognise the importance of GCSE exams and the preparation time needed to do as well as possible.
- Reward your child's efforts to revise.
- Reduce the number of chores that they have to do when the examinations start.
- Make sure that the whole family respects the importance of keeping disturbances to a minimum.
- Be sensitive to the pressure and stress that your teenager may be experiencing; encourage them to speak to you about it.
- Make sure that time is built in for exercise and recreation.
- Respect their growing independence. Ask them how you can best support them.
- Help them to keep things in perspective.
- Take an active interest in their learning.

GCSE EXAMINATIONS:

The Immediate Run Up to the Exams:

Make sure that your child knows:

- What day each exam is on and at what time it starts.
- The length of time of each exam.
- What is being tested in each exam (e.g. which topics or skills).

Before exams, try to ensure that:

- Your son / daughter gets enough sleep, especially the night before exams.
- They are eating sensibly – especially breakfast on exam days. Slow release carbohydrates are best, such as cereal, oats, porridge, toast and fruit.
- They have all the equipment required: black pens and sharp pencils, erasers, a ruler, a calculator and a protractor. Remember that mobile 'phones, SMART / Apple watches, iPods and other electronic devices are not allowed in the exam hall – even if these are switched off.
- Remember how you approach the next few months can have a real impact on your child's future. Studies show that high parental interest is linked with better exam results than for children whose parents show no interest.

Managing Stress:

Around intense revision periods and examination times, it is inevitable that students will feel a certain amount of stress. Signs could include:

- lack of concentration;
- avoiding people;
- being more sensitive or argumentative;
- changes in eating habits;
- changes in sleep patterns.

Try to note your child's stress signs and take action when they appear. Home life being as calm and pleasant as possible during exam time will be helpful. Making sure other members of the household are aware so they understand that your child may be under pressure and allowances made will be supportive. Your child may need reassurance that it is ok not to be ok in times of stress. Talking about what is making them feel anxious may assist them. Let your child know you are there to listen to any worries or concerns they may have.

Mindfulness helps many young adults reduce anxiety symptoms. A positive mind-set, relaxation techniques, regular exercise, regular sleep, eating healthily and managing time effectively all assist with minimising stress.



USEFUL WEBSITES TO AID REVISION:

General Websites:

www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize
www.getrevising.co.uk
www.samlearning.com
www.senecalearning.com
www.s-cool.co.uk
www.tutor2u.net
www.revisionworld.co.uk
www.gcsepod.co.uk
www.snaprevise.co.uk

www.gojimo.com
www.quizlet.com
www.memrise.com
www.getrevising.co.uk
www.imindmap.com

Business:

www.tutor2u.net
www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize

English Language:

www.bbc.com/bitesize - a variety of activities to support the AQA English Language GCSE course. There are model responses, support with sentence starters and success criteria for each question on Paper 1 & Paper 2.

www.youtube.com - 'Mr Bruff' Language tutorial videos range from Level 4 support if you are struggling with the basics to high-ability videos if you are pushing yourself.

<http://lifemoreextraordinary.com/revision/revise-english-language-gcse-aqa/> - An engaging video tutorial of Language support exploring the top tips and must have exam skills.

<http://www.englishbiz.co.uk/> - An engaging website that offers a wide range of GCSE English Language skills and resources to practise at home.

English Literature:

www.bbc.com/bitesize - This website has a variety of activities to support the study of all the Literature texts students are studying at GCSE.

www.revisionword.com - This website has a variety of activities to support the study of all the Literature texts students are studying at GCSE.

www.studywise.co.uk - Various links to revision sites and tuition videos.

www.quizlet.com – Variety of flashcard activities focusing on Literature texts e.g. characters, key quotations, themes etc.

www.youtube.com – 'Mr Bruff' Literature tutorial videos range from Level 4 support if you are struggling with the basics to a range of high-ability videos if you are pushing yourself.

<https://www.sparknotes.com/nofear/shakespeare/macbeth/> - Spark Notes provides a modern day 'translation' of 'Macbeth' which helps with understanding the play as a whole, including support notes and annotations to further develop your critical analysis of the text.

Food Preparation and Nutrition:

Healthy eating: www.nutrition.org.uk/healthyliving/helpingyoueatwell.html

Basics of nutrition: www.nutrition.org.uk/healthyliving/basics.html

The Eatwell Guide: www.nutrition.org.uk/healthyliving/healthydiet/eatwellvideo.html

Nutritional Analysis: www.explorefood.foodafactoflife.org.uk

Recipes: www.bbcgoodfood.com

Fairtrade: <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/>

Revision: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/design/foodtech/>

Geography:

<https://timeforgeography.co.uk/> - excellent for revision/video clips on selected topics especially rivers and coasts

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/geography/gcse/geography-8035/specification-at-a-glance> - summarises the specification content

<https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/examspecs/zy3ptyc> - revision of topics specific to the AQA syllabus – includes key points and revision tests

History and RE:

Normans and Germany depth studies: <https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/examspecs/zxjk4j6>

For specimen exam materials to practise and exemplar answers and commentaries:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/history/gcse/history-8145/assessment-resources>

For RE: <https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/examspecs/z3xvfcw>

iMedia:

<https://shmoodle.co.uk/course/view.php?id=676>

<https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/182850-combined-feedback-r081-january-2014-exam-paper.pdf>

<https://quizlet.com/44129565/creative-imedia-r081-revision-flash-cards/>

<http://tmbssimedia.weebly.com/pre-production-skills--r081.html>

<https://yacapaca.com/resources/unsorted-ict-resources/ocr-cambridge-nationals-in-creative-imedia/all/>

Languages:

www.kerboodle.com – all students have access to resources and the digital GCSE textbooks.

Username is Surname plus first letter e.g. SmithB. Institution code is pk2

www.quizlet.com – provides sets of flashcards and activities to learn them

www.duolingo.com – also an app for smartphones – learn basics in 5 or 10 minutes a day

Mathematics:

<https://vle.mathswatch.co.uk/vle> Username: la(their student number)@louthacademy

Password: la(their student number)

www.justmaths.co.uk/online Username: Louthstudent Password: Louth

<https://www.mathsgenie.co.uk/gcse.html>

<https://corbettmaths.com/>

<https://www.onmaths.com/>

<http://www.mrbartonmaths.com/students/>

<http://www.studymaths.co.uk>

Science:

www.kerboodle.com
www.twig-world.com
www.s-cool.co.uk/gcse/chemistry
www.bbc.co.uk/education
www.rsc.org
www.nationalgeographic.com/science
www.youtube.com/user/thehealthcaretriage
www.youtube.com/user/Kurzgesagt
www.nuffieldfoundation.org/practical-biology
www.gcsescience.com
www.revisionscience.com/gcse-revision
www.mathsmadeeasy.co.uk/gcse-science-revision/
www.bbc.com/bitesize/subjects/zrkw2hv
<http://www.docbrown.info/gcsechemistry.htm>

Technology:

www.technologystudent.com
www.gcsebitesize.co.uk
www.focuselearning.co.uk



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