

My May Assessments

Date	Subject	Paper	Time	Room

In the May assessments, you won't necessarily be in your normal classrooms and may be in rooms you've never been in before. If in doubt, take a walk to your designated rooms now, so that you don't find yourself lost looking for your class in the few minutes before the assessments start.

Step 2

Check that you have what you need to study.

For each subject:

- If you have been absent (before or during lockdown) and think you may have missed some notes or study materials, speak with your teacher. Together, identify what is missing and fix that. Ask now – don't leave it to the last minute.
- Do you need any stationery for studying at home? Would extra paper, jotters, pens, ring binders, document wallets etc. help you? Speak to your favourite teachers if you need a wee stash to take home.
- If you have a concession (for example, a scribe, a coloured question paper etc.) have you talked with each of your individual teachers about this? They already have all the information but do check-in with them each individually so that you feel confident about what's in place and you can picture in advance exactly what it will be like. Remember, too, that Mrs. Reid (whose office is between the English bridge and the library) leads this area for the school and is a brilliant person to talk with if you have any questions about your additional support concessions.

Step 3

Physically organise your study materials.

A year of study – over several qualifications – produces a lot of paper (and digital notes). For that reason, take some time to physically arrange them. Take a subject at a time. Have a different folder for each subject. Split the folder into sections. Label the sections so that each one matches the way your assessments will be split up. For example, for English, have all your Set Text notes in one section, all your critical essay prep in another section, all your imagery question practices in another

section etc. Bin anything unhelpful or messy or distracting so that your study folders are stripped back to the useful essentials.

Step 4.
Mindset matters.

Acknowledge that the *attitude* with which you tackle the final two months of your courses will either raise or lower your final results. Believe that the power lies with you. Make the decision to put your game-face on and get going.

Have you heard of growth mindset?



"I'm rubbish at this subject so I'm never going to pass anyway. What's the point in trying?"

"There's too much to study. I can't do it."

"It's my teacher's fault."

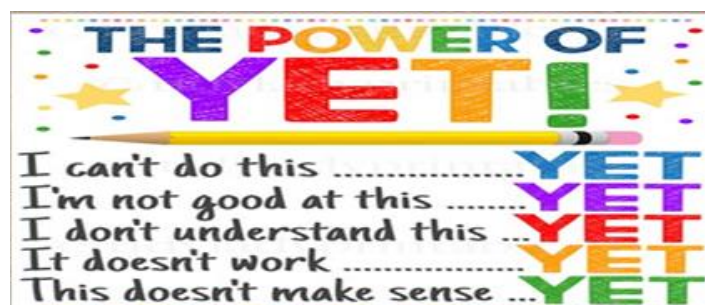
FIXED MINDSET		GROWTH MINDSET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SOMETHING YOU'RE BORN WITH FIXED 	SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COME FROM HARD WORK. CAN ALWAYS IMPROVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SOMETHING TO AVOID COULD REVEAL LACK OF SKILL TEND TO GIVE UP EASILY 	CHALLENGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SHOULD BE EMBRACED AN OPPORTUNITY TO GROW. MORE PERSISTANT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNNECESSARY SOMETHING YOU DO WHEN YOU ARE NOT GOOD ENOUGH 	EFFORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESSENTIAL A PATH TO MASTERY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GET DEFENSIVE TAKE IT PERSONAL 	FEEDBACK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USEFUL SOMETHING TO LEARN FROM IDENTIFY AREAS TO IMPROVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BLAME OTHERS GET DISCOURAGED 	SETBACKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USE AS A WAKE-UP CALL TO WORK HARDER NEXT TIME.

"I'm not great at this subject but if I graft hard, I could pass."

"This is hard but I'm sticking with it. It's only two more months. I can handle that."

"I failed that practice test but at least now I know what needs more study."

You can read (and watch) more about the science behind this here: <https://fs.blog/2015/03/carol-dweck-mindset/>



Step 5.

Use the study techniques which work the best.

It is called 'retrieval practice' when we deliberately choose to use the study techniques which science tells us work best for the brain. Some of the techniques which are actually quite popular with pupils are the ones which science tells us aren't particularly helpful. Have a look:

Ineffective	Highly Effective
Last minute cramming.	Starting early, planning and spacing study out.
Simply re-reading/ copying out notes.	Using notes, textbook or flashcards to test yourself or be quizzed by others.
Simply highlighting text.	Using key concepts highlighted to create study aids such as flash cards or a mind map to use in self-testing or quizzing by others.
Studying one topic always in the same order.	Interleaving (mixing up) topics raises the challenge and the extra effort aids memory and understanding.
Listening to music.	Reducing distractions as much as possible is better for focus.
Using (visual, auditory or kinaesthetic) preferred study styles.	Fine as a motivation to start study, but not an effective technique in itself.
Spending a lot of time studying.	Spacing revision in small, regular chunks, interleaving different topics when revising and switching between them is far more effective.
Repeating the study routines we are comfortable with.	Raising the challenge to create "desirable difficulties" makes you think harder, understand and remember better.

So what works best? There are six techniques which are proven winners, with lots of educational science to prove that they work. Here they are:

The Big Six!

1. Spacing
2. Interleaving
3. Quizzing and Testing
4. Dual Coding
5. Brain Dump
6. Flashcards

The Learning Scientists explain The Big Six in easy-to-follow videos. Here's an example:

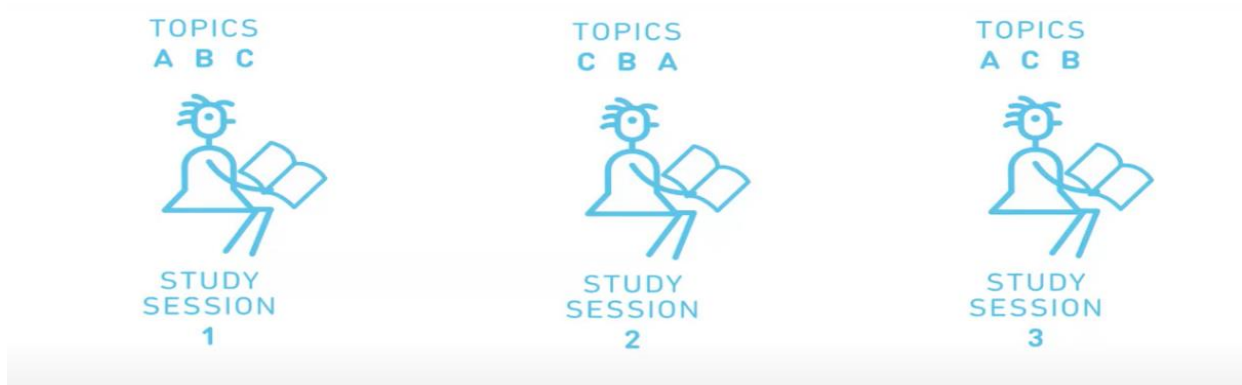
<https://youtu.be/CPxSzxyIRCI>

SPACING



Start planning early for assessments, and set aside a little bit of time every day. Five hours spread out over two weeks is better than the same five hours all at once. Review information from each class, but not immediately after class. After you review information from the most recent class, make sure to go back and study important older information to keep it fresh. This may seem difficult and you may forget some information from day to day, but this is actually a good thing! This forces you to retrieve information from memory.

INTERLEAVING



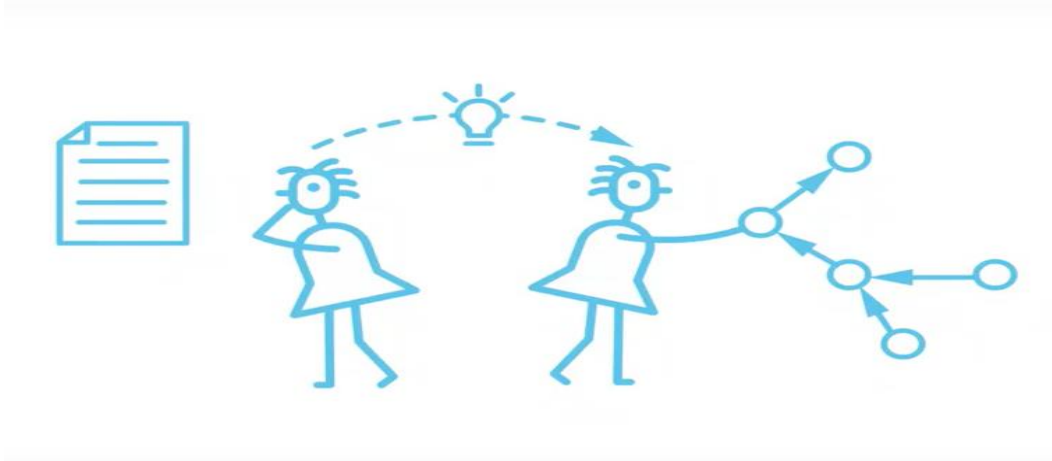
Go back over the ideas or topics in a different order to strengthen recall and understanding.

QUIZZING AND TESTING



Create quizzes using questions your teachers have given you.
Create your own quizzes using textbooks or notes.
Mix up the topics (interleave) to increase the difficulty!
Ask a friend or relative to test you.
Check your answers against those in the textbook/your notes/your teacher to see what you got right and where you need to focus now.

DUAL CODING



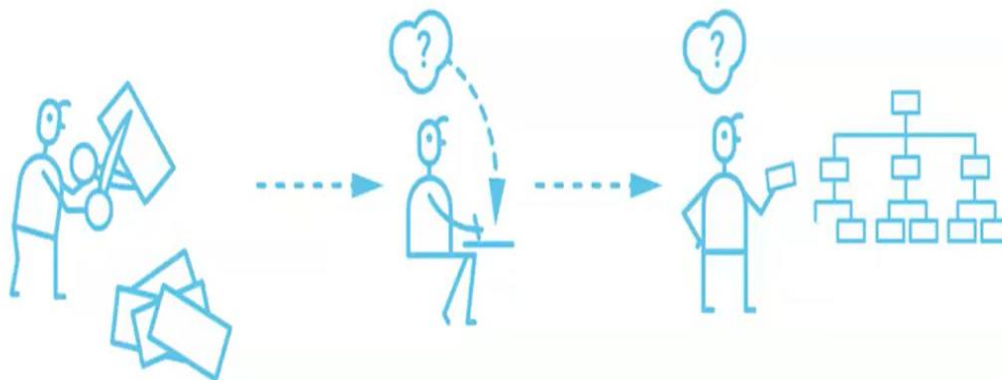
You can strengthen your understanding and recall of concepts by expressing them in different ways. For example, converting text to pictures, a mind map, flowchart, timeline or infographic. Or you might look at a visual representation and describe it in your own words. Working with the information has a more powerful effect than just looking at it. This can also help your brain make links in your learning.

BRAIN DUMP



Try putting your notes away and see how much you can remember on a topic. Write it down or draw it.
Then check your notes to see how accurate you were and what you missed out.
List the areas you need to understand or remember more clearly.
Take appropriate action - e.g. read your notes to fill in the gaps and/or ask your teacher to go over these areas with you again.

FLASHCARDS



Make flashcards (revision cards) of key information using your textbook or notes so you know they are accurate.
Test yourself or get a friend or relative to do this.
Think about the links between the information on each card – i.e. how are concepts or topics related to each other?
The Science Faculty is using Quizlet. Have you tried it?

**Good
Luck**

*you've
got this*