

Ayr Academy



**Making the Most of
Study Leave**

Study leave can be both a blessing and a curse. On the one hand, you've got time away from the classroom to really focus on revising, but on the other hand you've got procrastination temptation as you don't have a teacher checking up on your progress. With this in mind, here are top tips on making the most out of your study leave.

Create a Schedule

The first thing to do is create a timetable of what you're going to revise and when. You'll work much better and be more likely to cover everything if you've got a set plan to follow from the start. Not making a timetable and just picking up whatever you feel that day could lead you to miss important modules by mistake.

It doesn't have to be a boring timetable either, use stickers, colour coding, illustrations, whatever it takes to make your schedule stand out so much that you can't ignore it.

There is a template at the end of this guide.



Make sure you have the right equipment

Imagine what a nightmare it would be if you sat down to revise and you found all your pens didn't work and you had no paper!

Before your study leave begins equip yourself with the stationery essentials you will need whilst revising. Stock up on pens, highlighters, lots of lined paper and the all-important post-it-notes! If you need any subject specific stationery make sure you have that too!

Then there will be no need to waste your study leave getting distracted by going shopping.

Don't Be Afraid to Take Regular Breaks

Although it may be tempting to study non-stop for several hours, you and your brain need and deserve a break. So, take a step back from studying every 40 minutes or so for 10-15 minutes (or whatever works for you).

Step outside or go for a walk on your breaks too if you can, it'll wake you up and you'll feel a lot more refreshed when you hit the books again.

Stay Healthy and Hydrated

Not to sound like a nag or anything, but eating healthily and drinking plenty of water will make studying A LOT easier. You'll be focused, awake and positive, the three main things you need to succeed at revision.



So, keep a bottle of water at your side and junk food as far away from you as physically possible. Ignore the call of the chocolate biscuits, it'll be worth it in the end!

Study in a Clear Space

While it may be tempting to lie in bed studying, or stretch out on the sofa with your duvet pulled over you, revising in tidy space can make all the difference.

Try and recreate a classroom scenario while you're studying, so sat up straight at a table. And try to keep it as tidy as possible, a clean desk will give you a clear mind so you can fully focus on your notes.

Buddy Up

Studying without your classmates around you can feel really isolating, so why not create a study group with a few friends. Not only will you keep each other focused, but you'll also be each other's support when you hit the topics you struggle with the most.

Although select your study buddies carefully. If you and your best mate distract each other in class so much you get separated from each other, they might not be the best people to study with.

Studying with friends can increase your own knowledge of the subject, it can increase your friend's knowledge and it can also lead you to meeting new people. A number of students have found that one of the best things to do is to start a study group. Study groups offer you the chance to meet new people that have an interest in the subject that you're studying.



Remove Distractions

Turn off the TV, hide the gossip magazines and put away your phone, basically remove anything that will distract you.

And by put away your phone, I mean physically remove it from wherever you're studying and put it in another room, turned off. If it's by your side then it's guaranteed to still distract you, and your WhatsApp groups and Snapchat stories can wait.



Don't Put Off Your Weaker Subjects

While it may be tempting to start studying your stronger subjects, it's actually better to revise your weaker ones first. Starting with areas you struggle with means you'll be able to dedicate the most possible time to it and won't be cramming in the stuff you don't understand into whatever time is left.

Involve Your Family

Yes, family can be annoying during study leave. Your parents check up on you all the time, your siblings want to remind you of the fact they don't have to study and your pet just won't get the hint to leave you be. Involving your family with your studying can actually be a really good thing. They can help out on the stuff you struggle with, praise you for the stuff you do know, and even test you once you feel confident with the subject. The more support you have around you, the better.



Reward yourself

It's always good to have a clear target to aim for. For example, revising a subject in its entirety or completing a past paper!

Once you achieve your targets make sure you reward yourself – you deserve it!

Your reward can be something really simple like watching your favourite film or pampering yourself at home.

The Night Before an Exam

Do not do too much last-minute revising. If you do, you are likely to tire yourself out mentally. Read through a few of the most important revision cards. Then, sort out the clothes you are going to wear the next day and set out the equipment you need for the test, so you won't be rushed in the morning. Find something relaxing to do before you go to bed, such as reading or watching TV. Make sure you don't go to bed too late, but do not start worrying if you don't fall asleep immediately.

The Day of the Exam

Don't try to do any revision. Try to get to the room where the test is being held a few minutes early- you don't want to start the test feeling flustered because you arrived late. Try not to get drawn into conversations with your friends about what revision they've done and what questions you are likely to be asked.

In the Exam

- Check that you have been given the correct paper.
- Read the instructions on the front of the paper to make sure you understand what you have to do.
- When you are tackling a question, reread the question carefully to understand exactly what it is asking.
- Note any advice you are given about how much time to spend on each section.
- If you have a choice of questions, read all the questions and put ticks beside the ones you think you can do.
- Note how many marks a question carries. Don't waste time giving too detailed an answer when it is not needed.
- Leave yourself enough time at the end to read through your answers to check for careless mistakes and spelling errors.

Stress

Keep things in perspective: The exams might seem like the most crucial thing right now, but in the grander scheme of your whole life, they are only a small part. Just concentrate on the actual exam in hand, not what may or may not happen after.

Websites to help with stress:

Childline Exam Stress: <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/school-college-and-work/school-college/exam-stress/>

BBC Radio 1 Exam Stress:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/1HsY1X8ySjKBMVXPVCbP4qH/exam-stress>

BBC Radio 1 Revision Basics:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/4Klq403Q2CrqQVFslcJP00F/revision-basics>

NHS Coping with Exam Stress: <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/Coping-with-exam-stress.aspx>

NSPCC Beat Exam Stress: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources/research-and-resources/pre-2013/beat-exam-stress/>

Young Minds Problems at School: <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/feelings-and-symptoms/problems-at-school/>

Don't Panic

The final piece of advice sounds easier said than done, but remain calm. Panicking about how much you've got left to study or how many seconds until the exam will only distract you from the reading in front of you. So, clear your mind, focus on whatever topic you're studying that day, and believe in yourself. You can totally do this –

Believe Achieve!!!



