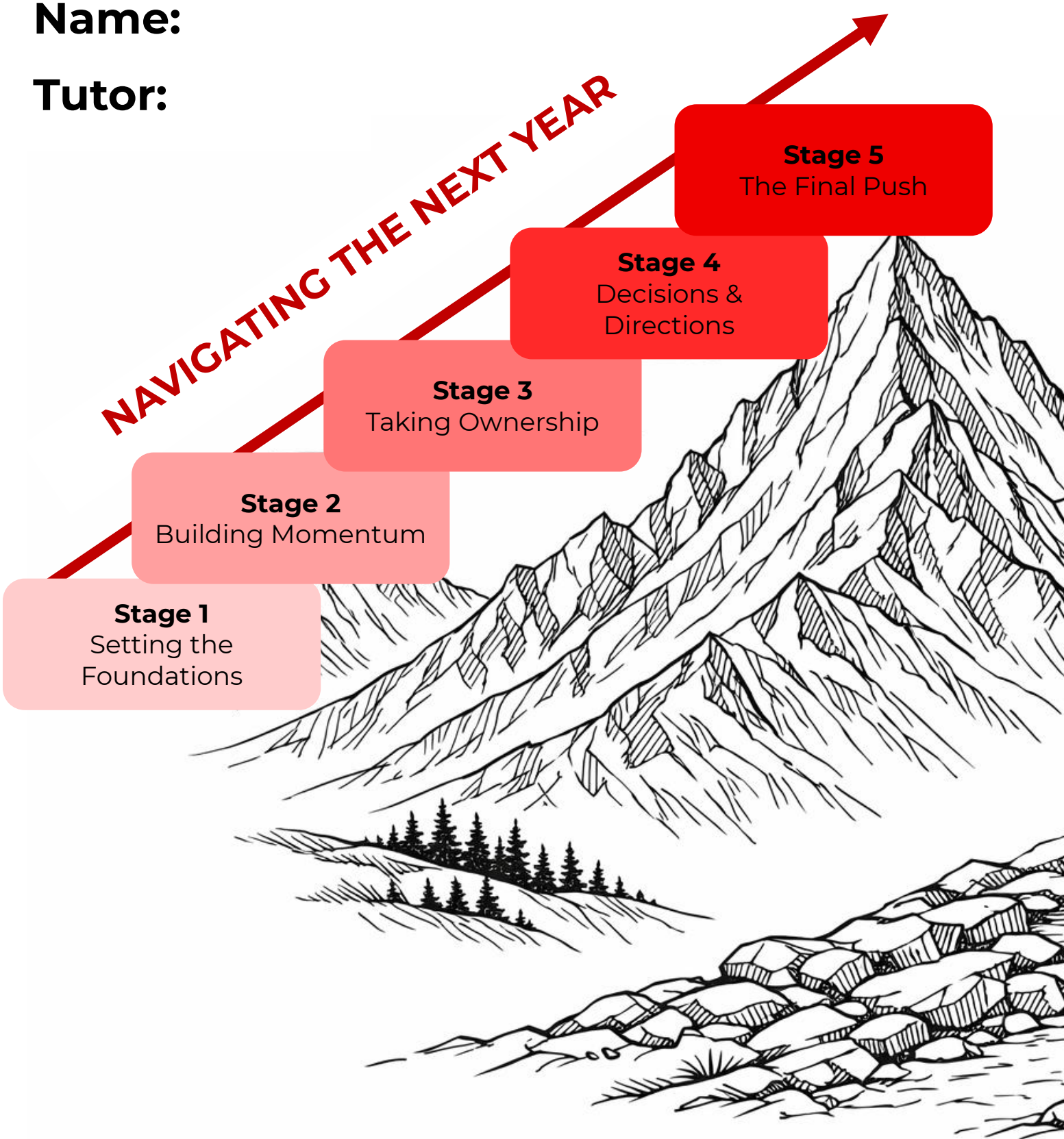
Year 11 Independent Study Journal

Name:

Tutor:



NAVIGATING THE NEXT YEAR

This journal is your map to your next destination, whether that be college, university, or an apprenticeship.

Sitting your GCSEs requires preparation, hard work and commitment.

In order to guide you through year 11, we have created a series of stages and check in points that include criteria to meet in order to be successful.

The stages and check in points also chunk your revision down into manageable smaller parts to prevent you feeling overwhelmed.

Your only task: Follow the route in this journal and complete the climb successfully to take you on to your next adventure in life. **The rewards will be immeasurable.**

Stage 1 : Setting the Foundations

- ☐ Over 95% attendance at this stage
- ☐ Have less then 3 lates to school at this stage
- ☐ Have less then 3 lates to lesson at this stage
- ☐ Have less than 5 negatives for late or incomplete homework
- ☐ Have less than 10 behaviour points at this stage
- ☐ Have an attitude to learning score of at least 3 in all subjects
- ☐ Attend your 1:1 Careers Advice appointment
- ☐ Be on target to achieve target grades in at least 4 subjects from your mock exams
- ☐ Climb Learning Journal shown to teachers and signed off

  Your Form Tutor will then tick off your box at the end of the stage

  A minimum of 5 subjects must be signed off to achieve this

Form Tutor Stage 1 Check

Signed:

Date:

Stage 2 : Building Momentum

- ☐ Over 95% attendance at this stage
- ☐ Have less then 3 lates to school at this stage
- ☐ Have less then 3 lates to lesson at this stage
- ☐ Have less than 5 negatives for late or incomplete homework
- ☐ Have less than 10 behaviour points at this stage
- ☐ Attend Year 11 Parents Evening
- ☐ Climb Learning Journal shown to teachers and signed off

  Your Form Tutor will then tick off your box at the end of the stage

  A minimum of 5 subjects must be signed off to achieve this

Form Tutor Stage 2 Check

Signed:

Date:

Stage 3 : Taking Ownership

- ☐ Over 95% attendance at this stage
- ☐ Have less than 3 lates to lesson at this stage
- ☐ Have less than 3 lates to school at this stage
- ☐ Have less than 5 negatives for late or incomplete homework
- ☐ Have less than 10 behaviour points at this stage
- ☐ Have an attitude to learning score of at least 3 in all subjects
- ☐ Be on target to achieve target grades in at least 5 subjects from your mock exams
- ☐ Create a revision timetable and show evidence of this to form tutor and parent/carer
- ☐ To submit an application to at least 3 post-16 providers
- ☐ Climb Learning Journal shown to teachers and signed off

  Your Form Tutor will then tick off your box at the end of the stage

  A minimum of 5 subjects must be signed off to achieve this

Form Tutor Stage 3 Check

Signed:

Date:

Stage 4 : Decisions & Directions

- ☐ Over 95% attendance at this stage
- ☐ Have less than 3 lates to lesson at this stage
- ☐ Have less than 3 lates to school at this stage
- ☐ Have less than 5 negatives for late or incomplete homework
- ☐ Have less than 10 behaviour points at this stage
- ☐ Climb Learning Journal shown to teachers and signed off

Your Form Tutor will then tick off your box at the end of the stage

A minimum of 5 subjects must be signed off to achieve this

Form Tutor Stage 4 Check

Signed:

Date:

Stage 5 : The Final Push

- ☐ Over 95% attendance at this stage
- ☐ Have less than 3 lates to lesson at this stage
- ☐ Have less than 3 lates to school at this stage
- ☐ Have less than 5 negatives for late or incomplete homework
- ☐ Have less than 10 behaviour points at this stage
- ☐ Have an attitude to learning score of at least 3 in all subjects
- ☐ Be on target to achieve target grades in at least 6 subjects from your mock exams
- ☐ To have a GCSE revision plan and timetable created, including dates of all your exams
- ☐ To be attending revision sessions on a daily basis
- ☐ Climb Learning Journal shown to teachers and signed off

Your Form Tutor will then tick off your box at the end of the stage

A minimum of 5 subjects must be signed off to achieve this

Form Tutor Stage 5 Check

Signed:

Date:

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THIS JOURNEY

The Basics

- Start early – i.e. months, not days before the exam
- Plan and use a revision timetable
- Find a quiet, organised space to revise in
- Limit distractions – i.e. keep your phone away
- Don't just read your notes
- Do lots of practice papers and questions
- Make sure you eat, sleep and take time out
- Stay positive

Dealing with Stress Stress is a normal part of everyone's life everyday, from minor inconveniences to greater challenges - Like sitting your GCSE's! A healthy lifestyle can help you deal with stress much better - That includes a healthy diet, enough sleep and ensuring you plan in some down time.	**Sleep** Getting enough sleep and rest is crucial to being able to tackle any challenge head on. Experts recommend at least an 8 hour sleep a night in order to feel fully recharged and rested. Keep your phone away from your bed so you are not tempted to scroll!
The right mindset Feelings of doubt will inevitably creep into your mind at times during this period. That's normal! Embrace a growth mindset - You are capable of great things when you put your mind to it. Take a deep breath and keep going.	**Diet** There is nothing more off putting for you than sitting in an exam with a rumbling stomach. Just like a car needs fuel, your body and mind requires whole foods to power our studies and revision. Ensure you eat at least 5 fruits and vegetables a day and drink 2L of water to feed your mind properly and keep the hunger pangs at bay.
Relaxation What do you like to do to relax? Make sure you plan in some time during the later periods and as you reach the final stage to relax and de-stress. Fresh air and sunlight have magical effects on your mindset so try and incorporate something outdoors, but most of all, do what you enjoy.	**Revision** Right from Y7, we have been equipping you with the revision tools you need to be successful. Research shows that you are more likely to remember something if you repeat it over spaced periods of time as opposed to cramming the night before. Make a revision timetable and use the strategies in this journal to guide your revision over the year

REVISION TIMETABLES

Revision involves:

- Finding out what you know and understand (and what you don't)
- Building on what you know and understand
- Finding out what has slipped your memory
- Working on ways of retaining information
- Practising answers
- Preparing to show what you have learned

Organisation is key to your success at GCSE. It will make revision much easier if you have a set out time for revising each subject.

Here are some important points to remember when planning your revision.

- Be realistic and plan time away from your work to avoid burn-out!
- Be focused: 30 minutes working followed by 10 minutes rest is a good starting point.
- Balance your subjects to ensure you include all of them
- If you share your revision plan with friends or family then you are more likely to stick to it.

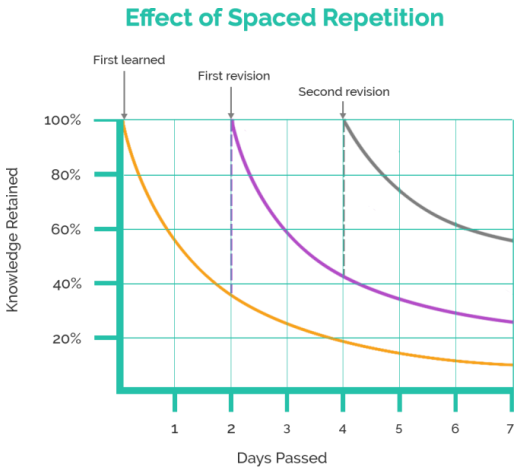
Use Spaced Revision

A learning technique that involves spreading out revision sessions over increasing intervals, rather than cramming, to improve long-term memory and knowledge retention. By revisiting information at strategic times before it's forgotten, students can move it from short-term to long-term memory, making it more accessible for their exams.

A good tip is using the following key on your timetable:

- N = New learning
- R1 / R2 / R3 = Review sessions

A good timetable doesn't just show what you'll learn – it shows when you'll come back to it.





Weekday Times	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Weekend Times	Saturday	Sunday
07.45 – 08.15am Before school sessions								
08.30 – 08.50am Tutor Time								
13.30 – 13.55pm Lunchtime sessions								
15.05 – 16.05pm After school sessions								
17.00 – 17.30pm								
17.45 – 18.15pm								
18.30 – 19.00pm								
19.15 – 19.45pm								
20.00 – 20.30pm								

REVISION TECHNIQUES

The Core 5

The Core 5 techniques below are the most effective ways to revise for GCSEs. They help you remember more, spot gaps, and improve exam performance.

What to do	What to do	Why this works	Top Tips
Past papers 	Answer real GCSE exam questions or full papers Work under timed conditions where possible	Shows you exactly what exams are like Helps you practise exam technique, timing and command words	Always check your answers using the mark scheme Learn from mistakes – errors help you improve Redo questions after revising weak topics
Flashcards 	Write a question or keyword on one side Write the answer on the back Test yourself regularly	Improves memory and recall Ideal for definitions, quotes, formulae and key facts	Keep answers short and clear Test yourself without looking first Get someone else to quiz you if possible
Mind Maps 	Write the topic in the centre of the page Add key ideas, facts, examples and diagrams around it Use colour and keywords	Helps organise knowledge Makes links between ideas Supports understanding of a whole topic	One topic per page Use keywords, not sentences Add examples or diagrams where possible
Brain Dumps 	Write everything you can remember about a topic Do this without notes Check afterwards and add missing points	Tests what you really know Highlights gaps in memory before exams	Do this at the start or end of revision Add missing knowledge in a different colour Repeat regularly to check improvement
Look, Cover, Write, Check 	Look at your notes or revision guide Cover them up Write everything you remember Check and correct your work	Builds strong memory recall Moves information into long-term memory	Don't copy – write from memory Correct mistakes in a different colour Repeat until you can recall it confidently

HOW TO USE PAST EXAM PAPERS



Past papers are one of the best revision tools for GCSEs - if you use them properly! Here's how to get the most out of them.

START WITH THE RIGHT PAPER

Make sure you use:

- The correct exam board (AQA, Edexcel etc)
- The right subject and tier (Foundation or Higher)
- Recent papers if possible

Ask your teacher or check your exam board website for past papers

TRY A PAPER WITHOUT NOTES

Treat it like the real exam:

- Time yourself
- No phone
- No notes
- Quiet space

This helps you practise exam pressure and timing

LOOK AT THE MARK SCHEME

Don't just check the answers - read:

- How marks are awarded
- What keywords are needed
- How much detail is expected

This shows how your examiners think

LEARN FROM YOUR MISTAKES

Ask yourself:

- Was it a knowledge problem?
- A misunderstanding?
- A timing issue?

Mistakes = Learning opportunities

CREATE A 'FIX-IT' LIST

Write down:

- Topics you struggled with
- Common mistakes
- Weak exam skills

Use this to focus your next revision session

REDO THE SAME QUESTIONS

After revising the topic:

- Try the same questions again
- Aim for full marks

This proves you've improved

PRACTISE EXAM TIMING

Learn how long to spend on:

- 1 mark questions
- 4-6 mark questions
- Extended answers

Good timing = More marks

LEARN THE COMMAND WORDS

Know what these mean:

- Describe
- Explain
- Compare
- Evaluate

They tell you *how* to answer the question

DIFFERENT PURPOSES

You can use papers for different purposes:

- Do full papers
- Just practise one topic
- Focus on long answer questions
- Practice maths calculations

Mix it up and stay motivated

TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

Keep a record of:

- Scores
- Weak areas
- Improvements

Seeing progress boosts confidence

HOW TO USE FLASCHARDS



Flashcards are one of the most powerful revision tools — if you use them properly. They help you remember key information, test your memory, and prepare for exams.

1 MAKE YOUR FLASHCARDS PROPERLY

Front of the card

- A question, key word or phrase
  - e.g. *What is osmosis?*
  - *Quote from Macbeth about ambition*

Back of the card

- A clear, accurate answer
- Keep it short and precise
- Include:
  - Definitions
  - Key facts
  - Quotes or examples

✅ One idea per card
❌ Do not write paragraphs

2 TEST YOURSELF (DON'T JUST READ)

Flashcards only work if you test your memory.

1. Look at the question
2. Say the answer out loud or in your head
3. Turn the card over
4. Check how accurate you were

If you had to peek or guessed — it doesn't count.

3 SORT YOUR CARDS

Use three piles:

- ✅ Confident – I know this well
- ⚠️ Getting there – nearly there
- ❌ Not yet – need to practise again

Revise:

- Weak cards daily
- Medium cards every few days
- Strong cards weekly

This helps focus your time where it matters most.

4 IMPROVE YOUR CARDS

After testing:

- Add missing details in a different colour
- Correct mistakes clearly
- Rewrite any cards that are too long or unclear

Mistakes are part of learning — fixing them makes you stronger.

5 USE FLASHCARDS LITTLE AND OFTEN

Flashcards work best in short sessions:

- 10–20 minutes
- Regularly
- Spread over time

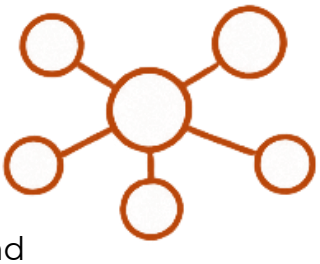
Use them:

- Before bed
- On the bus
- At breakfast

6 TOP TIPS FOR SUCCESS

✓ Test yourself before checking answers
✓ Shuffle cards to avoid memorising order
✓ Get someone else to quiz you
✓ Bring flashcards into school to show teachers
✓ Stick typed cards or summaries into your journal if needed

HOW TO USE MIND MAPS



Mind maps are a powerful way to organise knowledge, make links, and revise whole topics. They work best when they are clear, focused, and created from memory rather than copied.

1 START WITH A CLEAR FOCUS

- Write the topic title in the centre of the page
- Use a single topic (not a whole subject)

Examples:

- *Macbeth – Themes*
- *Cell Biology – Mitosis*
- *Causes of World War One*

✅ One topic per page
❌ Do not mix topics

2 ADD KEY BRANCHES

From the centre, draw branches for:

- Key ideas
- Main concepts
- Sub-topics

Then add smaller branches with:

- Facts
- Definitions
- Examples
- Quotes
- Diagrams

Use keywords, not sentences.

3 TRY IT FROM MEMORY FIRST

Before using notes:

1. Write the topic title
2. Add everything you can remember
3. Then check notes or a revision guide
4. Add missing information in a different colour

This helps you see what you really know.

4 USE COLOUR AND VISUALS

Mind maps work best when you:

- Use colour to group ideas
- Add arrows to show links
- Draw simple diagrams or symbols

This makes information easier to remember and quicker to revise.

5 KEEP IT CLEAR AND UNCLUTTERED

A good mind map is:

- Easy to read
- Well-spaced
- Focused on the most important content

If it becomes overcrowded, start a new page.

6 TOP TIPS FOR SUCCESS

✓ Use one page per topic
✓ Write keywords, not paragraphs
✓ Add examples where possible
✓ Update mind maps as your knowledge improves
✓ Bring mind maps into school for teacher sign-off

HOW TO USE BRAIN DUMPS



Brain dumps are one of the quickest ways to see what you really know and what you still need to revise. They test your memory honestly and help you focus your revision where it matters most.

START WITH A CLEAR TOPIC	DUMP EVERYTHING YOU REMEMBER

• Write the topic title at the top of the page
• Choose one topic only (not a whole subject)
 	
Examples:
• *Photosynthesis*
• *Macbeth – Characters*
• *Causes of the Cold War*
 	
✅ One topic per page
❌ Do not mix topics
	• Write down everything you can recall about the topic
	• Do this:
	  ○ Without notes
	  ○ Without phones
	  ○ Without help
	
	Do not worry about neatness at this stage — focus on memory.

CHECK AND CORRECT	**USE YOUR BRAIN DUMP TO REVISE SMARTER**

• Use notes, a revision guide or mark scheme to check
• Add missing facts in a different colour
• Correct any mistakes clearly
 	
This shows where your knowledge is secure and where gaps are.
	After checking:
	• Identify weak areas
	• Turn gaps into:
	  ○ Flashcards
	  ○ Mind maps
	  ○ Look–Cover–Write–Check practice
	• Redo the brain dump later to check improvement

WHEN SHOULD I USE BRAIN DUMPS?	**TOP TIPS FOR SUCCESS**
Brain dumps work best: • At the start of revision (to identify gaps) • At the end of revision (to check progress) • Before a test or mock exam They are ideal for quick, focused revision.	✓ Always do brain dumps from memory first ✓ Use colour to show improvements ✓ Keep them honest — guessing doesn't help ✓ Bring completed brain dumps into school ✓ Use them as evidence for independent study sign-off

HOW TO USE LOOK-COVER-WRITE-CHECK



Look–Cover–Write–Check is one of the most effective ways to learn key knowledge and move it into long-term memory. It works because it forces your brain to recall, not copy.

LOOK	COVER

• Look carefully at your notes, revision guide or textbook
 	
• Focus on:
  ○ Definitions
  ○ Key facts
  ○ Processes
  ○ Formulae
  ○ Quotes
 	
• Only look long enough to understand the information.
	• Cover your notes completely
	• Do not peek
	• This is the most important step — your brain must work without help

WRITE	**CHECK**

• Write down everything you can remember
 	
• Use:
  ○ Bullet points
  ○ Diagrams
  ○ Keywords
 	
Do not worry about mistakes — they help you learn.
	• Uncover your notes
	• Compare your answers carefully
	• Correct mistakes and add missing details in a different colour
	
	This shows:
	• What you remembered
	• What you need to practise again

REPEAT	**WHAT IS THIS BEST FOR?**
• Cover your work again • Try to write it out more accurately • Repeat until you can recall it confidently Short, repeated attempts are better than one long attempt.	• Definitions and key vocabulary • Formulae and equations • Quotes and key facts • Processes (e.g. photosynthesis, river formation) • Lists and sequences

TOP REVISION WEBSITES FOR YEAR 11

Top Tip!
Don't use too many websites at once.
Pick 2-3 and use them regularly.

BBC BITESIZE

Best for:
- All subjects
- Clear explanations
- Videos & quizzes
- Exam practice

Perfect for daily revision
www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize

SENECA

Best for:
- Science, Humanities
- Interactive courses
- Memory-boosting quizzes

Great for independent study
www.senecalearning.com

CAROUSEL LEARNING

Best for:
- Humanities
- Flashcards
- Memory-boosting quizzes

Great for independent study
https://student.carousel-learning.com/login

Maths Genie

Best for:
- GCSE Maths
- Topic questions
- Past papers
- Video tutorials

Ideal for exam practice
www.mathsgenie.co.uk

Quizlet

Best for:
- Flashcards
- Key terms
- Quick revision

Search your subject + exam board
www.quizlet.com

PMT
resources • tuition • courses

Best for:
- Science, Maths,
- Mark schemes
- Exam questions
- Revision notes

High-quality exam prep
www.physicsandmathstutor.com

ExamJam

Best for:
- Personalised support through an AI tutor
- Targeting gaps
- Exam-style questions with feedback
- Personalisation

See Ms Canneman for access if you would like to use this platform
www.examjam.com

gcsepod
education on demand

Best for:
- Knowledge delivery
- Recall of content
- Audio-visual videos

Building core subject knowledge quickly
https://www.gcsepod.com/

INDEPENDENT STUDY LOGS

Your Independent Study Log is one of the most important parts of your Year 11 journey. It shows the effort you are putting in *outside* of lessons and helps staff support you to reach your target grades.

1. What counts as independent study?

Independent study is extra work you choose to do to improve your learning. This is not homework.

Examples include:

- Past exam questions or full papers
- Revision notes, mind maps or flashcards
- Seneca / Maths Genie / BBC Bitesize work
- Revising a topic you found difficult in class
- Retrying exam questions after feedback

This work should help you improve, not just repeat what you already know.

2. How do I complete my log?

Each stage has its own Independent Study Log

For every subject:

- Complete a *quality* piece of independent study
- Show it to your subject teacher
- Your teacher will sign and date your log

You must have a minimum of 5 different subjects signed off in every stage

3. When should I show my work?

You can show your independent study:

- During lessons
- At break or lunchtime
- After school or during revision sessions
- Any agreed time with your teacher

Don’t leave this until the last minute — little and often works best.

4. What is the role of your Form Tutor?

At the end of each stage, your Form Tutor will:

- Check your Independent Study Log
- Make sure you have at least 5 subjects signed
- Tick off the stage if all criteria are met

If your log is incomplete, the stage will not be signed off

5. Why is this important?

Your Independent Study Logs are used to:

- Track your readiness for GCSE exams
- Help staff identify where you need support
- Evidence effort, commitment and organisation
- Decide access to privileges, rewards and support
- Prepare you for college, sixth form or apprenticeships

They also help you build the self-discipline and habits needed after Year 11.

7. Key things to remember

- Independent study is in addition to homework
- Quality matters more than quantity
- Spread work across subjects
- Keep your journal organised and bring it to school daily
- Ask for help if you're not sure what to do

STAGE 1 : Setting the Foundations
INDEPENDENT STUDY LOG

Your subject teacher will sign and date here every time you show them a piece of independent study.

A minimum of 5 subjects must be signed off to achieve this.

Remember: This is in addition to weekly homework

Subject	Independent Study Piece
English	
Maths	
Science	
History / Geography	
Option A	
Option B	
Option C	
Option D	
Form Tutor	

STAGE 2 : Building Momentum
INDEPENDENT STUDY LOG

Your subject teacher will sign and date here every time you show them a piece of independent study.

A minimum of 5 subjects must be signed off to achieve this.

Remember: This is in addition to weekly homework

Subject	Independent Study Piece
English	
Maths	
Science	
History / Geography	
Option A	
Option B	
Option C	
Option D	
Form Tutor	

STAGE 3 : Taking Ownership
INDEPENDENT STUDY LOG

Your subject teacher will sign and date here every time you show them a piece of independent study.

A minimum of 5 subjects must be signed off to achieve this.

Remember: This is in addition to weekly homework

Subject	Independent Study Piece
English	
Maths	
Science	
History / Geography	
Option A	
Option B	
Option C	
Option D	
Form Tutor	

STAGE 4 : Decisions & Directions
INDEPENDENT STUDY LOG

Your subject teacher will sign and date here every time you show them a piece of independent study.

A minimum of 5 subjects must be signed off to achieve this.

Remember: This is in addition to weekly homework

Subject	Independent Study Piece
English	
Maths	
Science	
History / Geography	
Option A	
Option B	
Option C	
Option D	
Form Tutor	

STAGE 5 : The Final Push
INDEPENDENT STUDY LOG

Your subject teacher will sign and date here every time you show them a piece of independent study.

A minimum of 5 subjects must be signed off to achieve this.

Remember: This is in addition to weekly homework

Subject	Independent Study Piece
English	
Maths	
Science	
History / Geography	
Option A	
Option B	
Option C	
Option D	
Form Tutor	

INDEPENDENT STUDY SPACE

The Independent Study Space in your Study Journal is a working space. It is where you show your thinking and learning, not just record that you have revised.

You should use this space to actively practise, using the techniques in this booklet.

What is this space for?

This space is where you:

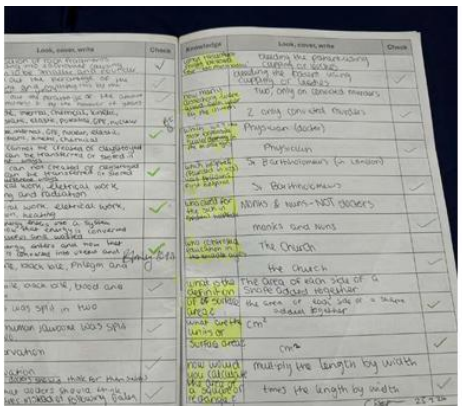
- Practise key knowledge
- Test what you can remember
- Identify gaps in your learning
- Improve recall for your GCSE exams

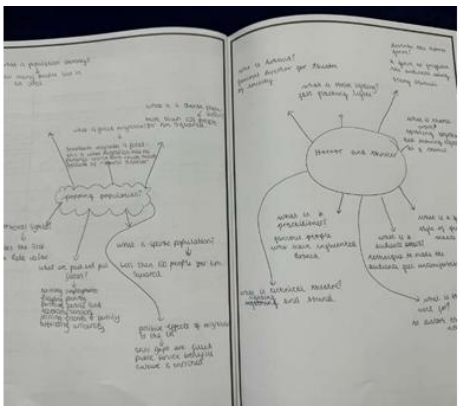
It helps turn revision into evidence that teachers can check and sign.

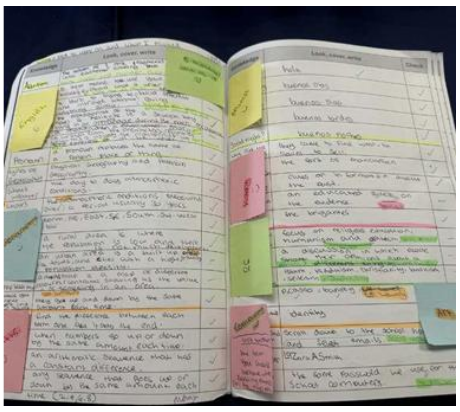
What could you complete in this space?

You can use it for:

- Mind Maps
- Brain Dumps
- Look - Cover - Write - Check
- Exam Question Practice







What makes work sign-off ready?

To be signed by a teacher, your work should:

- Be **neatly completed**
- Be clearly labelled with:
    - Subject
    - Topic
    - Date
- Show **effort and thinking**, not rushed notes
- Be your **own independent work**

Key reminder to students

This space is not for:

- Just decorating pages
- Copying from the internet
- Writing homework tasks
- Last-minute rushed work

It **is** for:

- Practising
- Making mistakes
- Improving

However:

👉 **Independent study can be completed anywhere**, for example:

- On loose paper
- Using a past paper
- Online platforms (Seneca, Maths Genie, etc.)

As long as you:

- Bring the work to school **or**
- Can clearly show it to your teacher

...it **can still be signed off** in your Independent Study Log.

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

Date	
Subject	
Topic	