

**WYMONDHAM
COLLEGE**



**GCSE
Exam Revision
Handbook
2020-21**



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Exam Dates:

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Mock Exams: | Start: Mid-January 2021 |
| Final Exams: | Start: Wednesday 26th May 2021 |
| Provisional dates: | End: Friday 2nd July 2021 |



Study Skills – Revision and Exam Preparation

Remember: It's never too late – the moment you stop trying is when they say put your pens down on the last paper

Getting prepared to revise:

- ❖ You can't revise unless all your notes are in the right order and tidy. Your main priority at this stage (2 months beforehand) is to be doing this. Your revision really needs to step up about 6 weeks before your first exam. At the moment it's crucial to be spending time putting all your notes in the right order and making sure they are clear to revise from. If they're not right, check with your teacher to see what you are missing.
- ❖ You must have a place where you can revise. It must be quiet with no TV on and no iPod on. It's OK to have QUIET music on in the background (but not from a radio where the voices will distract you between records) but if it begins to distract you switch it off.
- ❖ You need to be in a room on your own. It needs to be well lit and you need to be warm. You need a desk or table with a clear space and your files and books nearby. It needs to be a tidy area.
- ❖ Switch your mobile off when you revise and don't be tempted to use it or check it when working. If you're using the computer, don't have chat lines in use at the same time!
- ❖ If you cannot work at home think about other quiet spaces e.g. relatives home, local library.
- ❖ You should also be making good use of all the revision sessions taking place in the mornings, lunchtime and after school. You will receive regular information about these – but you can ask staff if you are unsure.
- ❖ Negotiate with your House staff/parents / carers what work they expect you to do in the home for the next few months. Explain to them when your best time for working is and ask if you can avoid doing work at those times. You might be able to offer to help in other ways which would benefit you e.g. taking the dog out each evening might give you a breather for 2 minutes and help the family; or if you're desperate to watch 'Eastenders' and you've got a TV in the kitchen you could offer to wash up when it's on and then start your work again as soon as it's finished.



- ❖ Use the subject sheets to work out which topics need the most revision. You must aim to cover every topic at least four times in the two months leading up to the exams. This will get each topic into your long term memory. You must concentrate first on those topics you find the most difficult. It is these topics that you should be working on at the present time – going over them and making clear new notes ready to start your revision.
- ❖ Use the revision plans to plan your week ahead. Start off by putting in the things that you have to do such as having your tea, washing up, sports fixtures, Saturday job etc. You need to be doing a MINIMUM of two and a half hours each night from Monday to Friday and a further six hours at the weekend. This means that if you choose to go out on a Friday night and did no work, then you might try to do three hours on Thursday and an extra two hours on Saturday. You should give yourself some time to do what you want to do. You should not go out for more than 2 nights a week and you need to watch any paid employment or sporting commitments that you have – a maximum of one day of those is the most that people can usually manage and succeed in their exams.
- ❖ In the next few months, you will still have prep and coursework to do. These must go on to the weekly planner first. You should then fill it up to the “correct” time with revision. Gradually you will find that all your weeks can be filled with revision as your teachers complete the syllabus.

REMEMBER:

- Academic tests/deadlines – e.g. CAT retakes, Sports Studies practical, Food practical, submission dates for Geography/Business/DT/Food/History
- Sports commitments – fixtures and training
- Music/Drama commitments – lessons, performances and rehearsals
- Leadership commitments – meetings and events
- Friends and family commitments – special events, parties, visits
- Support sessions you have been asked to attend by specific subjects

- ❖ Watch out for the times when you might normally do no work, and yet you could be fitting in quite a bit. For example, when you get in from school have a quick cup of tea, and then at 4.30 sit down and do half an hour before you have your tea. If you’re going out in an evening, do half an hour’s work before you go, or go later so that you get some work done first. Although two and a half hours looks a lot, you can fit it in quite easily.

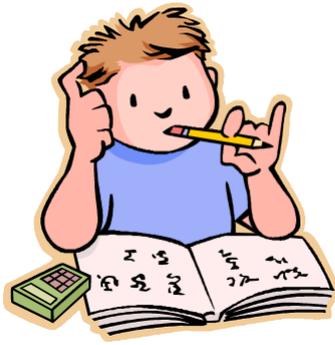


Day pupils

- 4.15 – get home, cup of tea
- 4.30 – one hour’s work
- 5.30 – watch TV
- 6.00 – tea and clear way
- 6.30 – one hour’s work
- 7.30 – break to go on computer, phone friends, etc
- 8.00 – 30 mins work
- By 8.30 you’ve done the required time and you’ve still got a lot of the evening left to spend how you want to.

Boarders

- 3.45 – back to house, biscuit
- 4.00 – 1/2 hour’s work
- 4:30 – watch TV
- 5.20 – tea & clear way, watch TV
- 6.15 – Prep (2 hours)
- By 8.15 you’ve done the required time and you’ve still got a lot of the evening left to spend how you want to.



How to Revise

- ❖ Stick to your revision timetable. If you go wrong you must allocate the time later on in the week.
- ❖ Work in 30 minute slots per subject. If you want to do an hour on a subject, then do more than one topic.
- ❖ Set yourself ambitious and realistic targets e.g. "I will learn 2 sides of notes in the next 30 minutes." Don't waste your time.
- ❖ Give yourself treats e.g. when I've learnt this, I can have a mars bar! Have my half hour in front of the TV, or check my text messages.
- ❖ Learn from your detailed notes. Be very careful of breaking down your notes on to little cards. When you do that you take away the detail that you need to know. It's OK to do it to help you to focus on the main points but you really do need the detail. Once you've learnt the main points from the cards, don't forget to go back to the detailed notes so you know plenty of detailed information. An alternative way is to use highlighter pens to focus on the key words amongst all the detail that you've got.
- ❖ A very thorough way to remember your notes is to learn them off by heart. It may seem utterly tedious, but it means you will remember a lot in the exam. To learn things of by heart read one paragraph at a time twice. Then turn your book over and try to repeat it out loud; look and check if you missed anything out and do it again until you've learnt and so on. Test yourself in different ways – you could write it out though that is time consuming, ask your parent to test you with one word answers or recite it to them (give them advance warning that you will need their help); even better is to get a friend who is doing the same course to test you as that will help them as well!

You will find that once you have learnt it once that way, the second and third time are easier and easier. When you have done this you should go through them again the next day, a week later and a month later.

- ❖ When you learn things of by heart use all the memory pictures and mnemonics that we've taught you.
- ❖ One of the best ways of learning is to teach the topic to someone else – either do this with a friend or imagine you're teaching a class!
- ❖ Whatever you do, don't just read and re read your notes or a book; you will take nothing in, or at least not so that you remember it.
- ❖ Have help notes stuck all over your bedroom walls, e.g. verbs you get stuck with, key words to remember in a subject, formulas for Maths etc.
- ❖ Make little cards with a question on one side and the answer on the back – shuffle them and test yourself or get someone else to test you.

- ❖ Use little phrases to help you e.g. say you had to remember the 5 things all Muslims have to do:-

- Fast at **R**amadan
- Believe in **A**llah
- Pay **M**oney to the poor
- **P**ray 5 times a day
- Go on **H**ajj

Then I would remember it by thinking "RAMP with a H" and it would give me a clue to help me remember the 5 things. Or with spellings e.g. stationary goes with car and stationery goes with pen so stationary is the one when you mean something's not moving, and stationery is the one you use to write on.

Pneumonics are very helpful e.g. **M**y **V**ery **E**asy **M**ethod **J**ust **S**peeds **U**p **N**aming **P**lanets (Planets: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune , Pluto).

- ❖ Draw mind maps of topics you find difficult to remember. To draw a mind map you should:-

- Put the title in the middle.
- Work out what each branch will be about.
- Highlight all the key ideas and key words you've got to get on to the mind map.
- Group the key words into the different sections which will be the branches.
- Do each branch in a different colour. Write the title on each branch.
- Draw pictures to help you.
- Don't miss out any key ideas.
- When you go through it, read it out loud as a series of questions and answers in rhythm.

- + Use websites and apps to help you to revise. Use them in the same way as other techniques – 30 minutes at a time. Use the enclosed list for useful sites. Do **not** get distracted on to other web sites!

- Memorise
- Revision App (free)
- iMindMap App (free)
- MyMaths (school logins provided)
- RevisionAid App (free)
- ExamCountdown App (free)
- Revision Buddies App (cost attached)
- CorbettMaths (free)

- ❖ Use tapes and DVDs to help you revise. BBC bitesize clips are excellent. Talking books of English Literature texts are very helpful.



"THE FUTURE
DEPENDS ON
WHAT YOU
DO TODAY."

GANDHI

- ❖ Once you have learnt a range of topics, you need to start doing some practice questions. You need to ask your teacher for some sample questions and old exam papers. The best thing to do is to decide on a topic that you have learnt, ask for a question; do it under timed conditions and then ask your teacher if he / she will mark it. As you learn more topics, try to do it for longer periods e.g. 3 questions in one and a half hours as that will give you the time practice that you will need. In May you should be aiming to do whole papers in your study leave time.
- ❖ Make sure you know exactly the layout of each exam paper i.e. which topics will you need to learn for it, how long will it last and what choice will you have. Make sure you have seen the layout of the question paper – see if there are any topics that always come up and so it's evident you must know them well.

if you work
really
hard ^{and}
you're kind
AMAZING things
will happen

- CONAN O'BRIEN

Use your Learning Style to help you Revise

In Year 9 we helped you decide what style of learner you were: You could be

- An auditory learner – a listener
- A visual learner – a looker
- A kinaesthetic learner – a doer

Different revision techniques will help difficult learning styles – remember you may be a mixture of styles!

Listeners:

- Repeat things to yourself out loud;
- Record your notes on Dictaphones or on your mobile phone and play them back repeatedly;
- Use 'Talking books' for your English texts;
- Use mnemonics;
- Create raps, rhymes and chants – set some to music;
- Teach the topic out loud to an imaginary classroom!
- Close your eyes when really concentrating so that you can focus on listening.
- Use ICT programmes that "speak" the information to you.

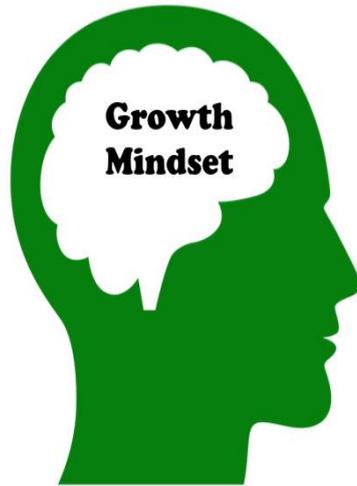
Lookers:

- Draw pictures and diagrams to remember key ideas;
- Draw and revise from mind maps and thinking maps
- Colour code sections of your work;
- Use different colour highlighter pens to focus key points;
- Watch videos or DVDs of topics you're studying, especially plays and films of English texts;
- Use post it notes and memory cards – stick them all over the place or play test yourself games with them;
- Use diagrams / lists techniques
- Use brightly coloured ICT programmes.

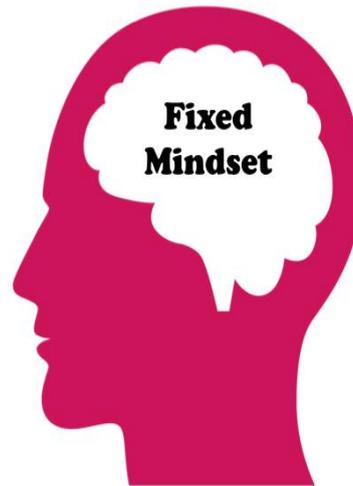
Doers:

- Highlight key ideas in coloured highlights;
- Use revision websites;
- Write key points of topics, mix them up and then go back later and put them in the right order
- Walk up and down when you are learning;
- Draw and revise from mind maps and thinking maps
- Make up games with your notes e.g. leaving gaps to fill in.

What Kind of Mindset Do You Have?



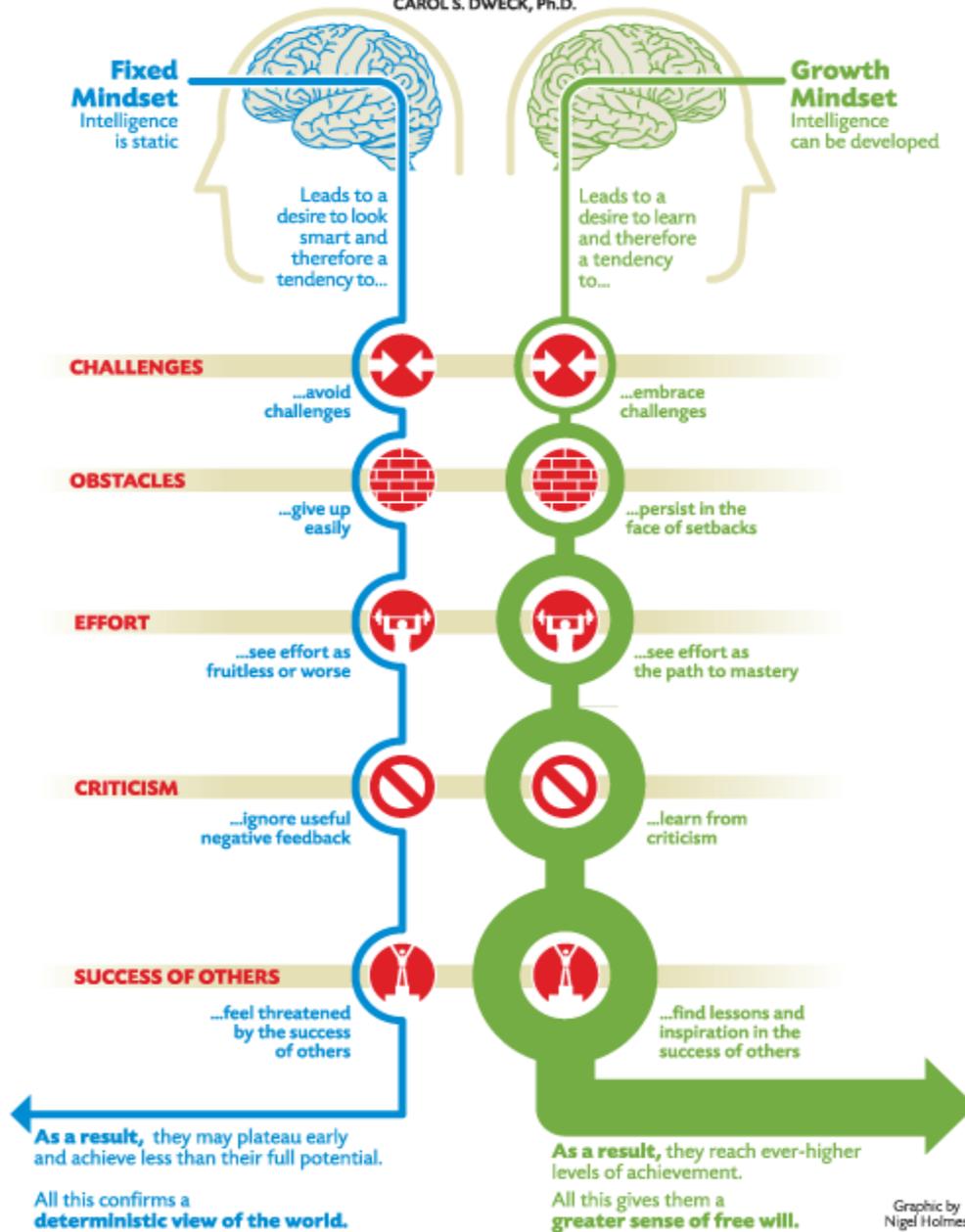
I can learn anything I want to.
When I'm frustrated, I persevere.
I want to challenge myself.
When I fail, I learn.
Tell me I try hard.
If you succeed, I'm inspired.
My effort and attitude determine everything.



I'm either good at it, or I'm not.
When I'm frustrated, I give up.
I don't like to be challenged.
When I fail, I'm no good.
Tell me I'm smart.
If you succeed, I feel threatened.
My abilities determine everything.

TWO MINDSETS

CAROL S. DWECK, Ph.D.



The Approach to the Exams

- ❖ As the last week or so approaches check your revision timetable and that you are going to cover all the topics which you need to. Think particularly carefully about the days before the exams. You should spend the evening before an exam just going over the things for that exam, but you need to think ahead if you have several exams clustered together. So think really carefully about what you are doing and when.
- ❖ Check the exact date and time of all your exams. Have them written up on the enclosed wall chart in your bedroom. Go through them with a friend who is doing the same exams. Make sure you know exactly what time you have got to be there. If you're not in the exam room, you can't pass!
- ❖ Buy all the right equipment. You must have 5 blue or black pens, 3 pencils, crayons, a 30cm ruler, rubber, sharpener, compass, set square, protractor and scientific calculator. Practice writing with the pen you are going to use – you need to be able to write very quickly and yet neatly with it. Some people are faster with a biro than an ink pen. Make sure it's all in a clear pencil case.
- ❖ Cancel paid employment if you can (give advance notice obviously – many employers will be very sympathetic); only go if it is really worth it.
- ❖ Stick to your revision timetable and keep at it – do not give up; you have very few weeks left to keep working so hard and it will soon be over. If you start getting upset, then have a quick break and go back to it. Use the staff and your parents / carers if you have any problems at this time. Try not to burden your friends if they are doing exams as well – it's not fair on them. Your teachers are very used to supporting students who are worrying about exams so use us – we like to feel we can be of help to you.

What to do in the exams

- ❖ Be there in plenty of time with the right equipment for that exam. Make sure you know exactly which room you have to go to.
- ❖ Do not take a mobile phone into the exam hall.
- ❖ Outside the exam room stand quietly and just think carefully about the topics that you have revised.
- ❖ Read the front of the paper carefully – **make sure you follow the instructions absolutely correctly.**
- ❖ For most exams, read the whole paper through before you attempt to answer anything. This will reassure you that there are questions there that you can do! Then go back through it, reading it again, and ticking off the questions that you can do. Double tick the questions that you think you can do well. Then start on the ones you can do best, making sure you number them clearly and that you follow the instructions on the front page.



❖ If you make a mistake and need to re-do a question, then re-do it, and then cross out the one you did wrong.

❖ **WATCH THE CLOCK** – work out how much time you have got for each question and stick to it. If you start getting behind badly, then either cut your answer right down, or leave a gap and come back to it if you get time and move onto the next question. If you're well ahead on time it might mean that you are not putting in as much detail as you can.



❖ Use the mark scheme. It is there to help you. If a question only has one mark then there is no point in writing masses. Alternatively if it has 10 marks you won't get very far if you only write one sentence or only include one or two relevant points.

❖ It doesn't matter if you show you're planning. You can do that in pencil and then put a line through it if you finish the question. If you don't finish it then the examiner may well look at the plan to see how you would have finished. In the same way you should show your working out in exams like maths as that can often gain you marks even if you don't get the final answer right.

❖ Remember the examiner is on your side. She or he wants to give you marks if at all possible, but you have to earn them.

❖ Ignore everybody else around you. The only thing you should look at is the clock. If someone next to you is ill, then ignore them – there are plenty of staff in the room for that very reason who will deal with any problems.

❖ If you finish early go back and check again and again and again and again. You would be amazed at how many mistakes people can spot at the end of an exam if they check it carefully.

❖ Once you've handed the paper in, that's it! You can't change anything. So even if you're upset that it went badly you've got to grit your teeth and get on with your revision for the next one. Ignore everyone else who's telling you how well it went for them – they're not you, they're not worth bothering about and they probably won't have done as well as you anyway!

❖ Make sure you know what to do if you are ill.

Revision Organisation Charts

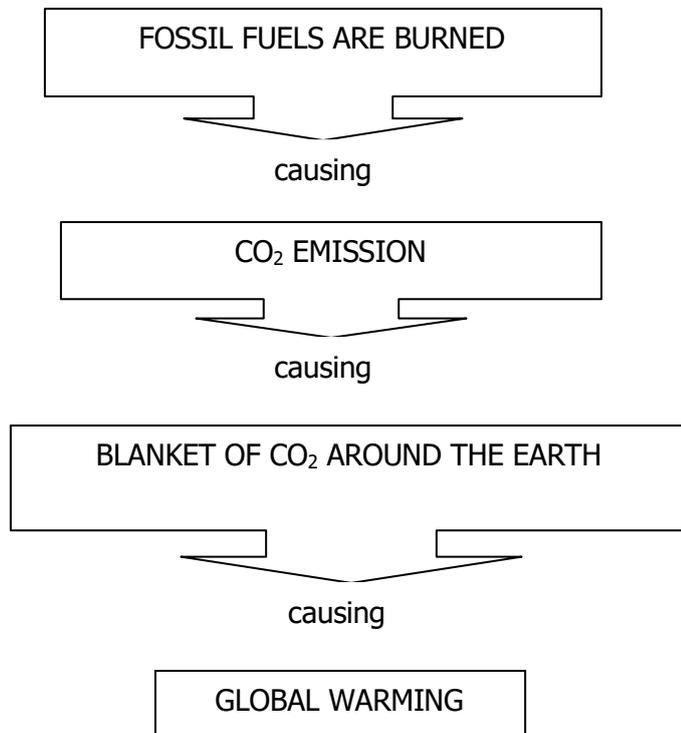
Different people learn things best in different ways. Here is a list of different revision ideas which may help you. You might want to use one method for one subject and a different method for another subject.

Using Pictures and Patterns to jog your memory

Diagrams and thinking maps often help you to remember the key points. There are different types of diagrams:

- a) **TREE CHARTS** are things that show you what order things happen in. For example, a family tree is a tree chart. You can also use it to show others things which happen in order.
- b) **A FLOW CHART** shows you what happened next and so it helps to jog your memory about the next stage.

For example, this is a flow chart which summarises how global warming is caused. This wouldn't be enough detail for you to answer a question, but it would show you the key points to remember.

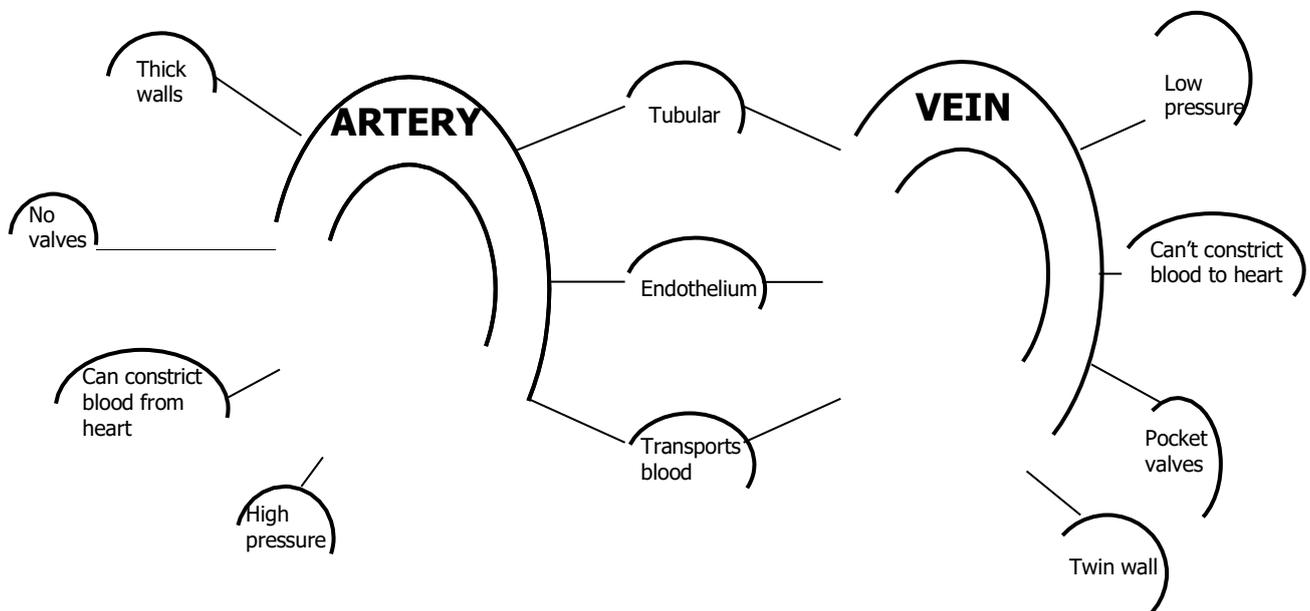


Pictures by the side help with remembering the key points.

c) Often there are two sides to an issue and drawing **two BOXES side by side** can be helpful. This may particularly apply when you are asked about advantages and disadvantages. In this case an issue in Business Studies concerns the advantages and disadvantages of using a private employment agency to appoint new people in a business.

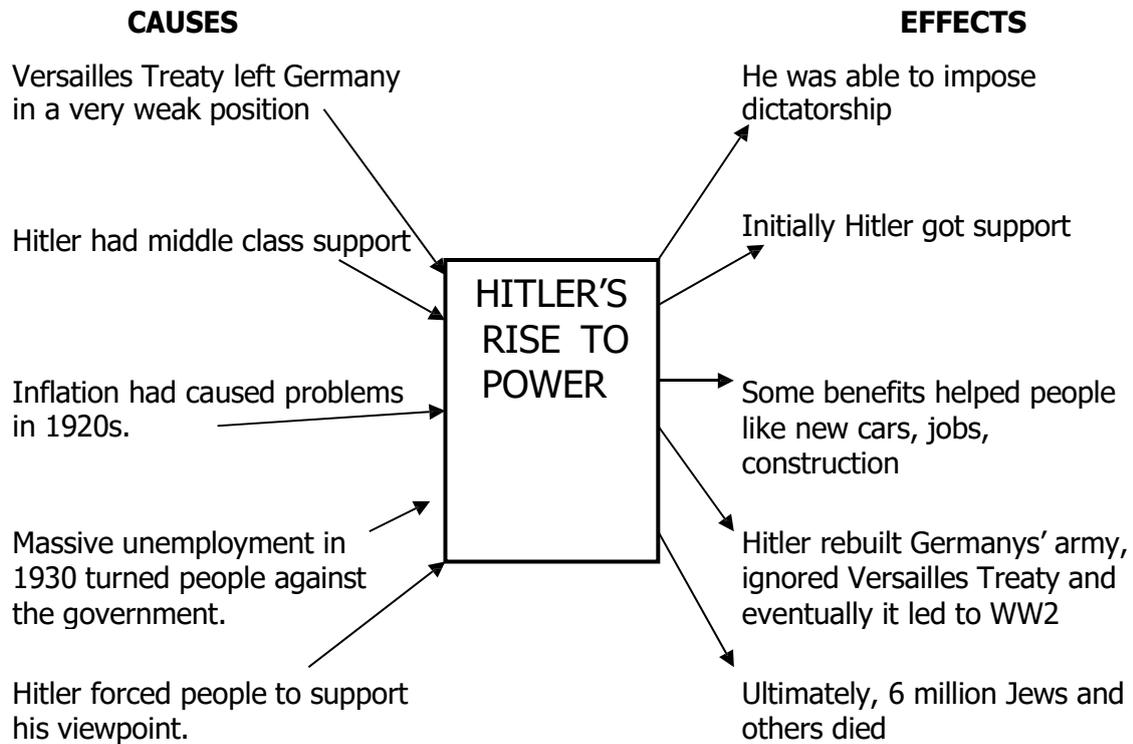
| Using an employment agency to make appointments | |
|---|---|
| Advantages | Disadvantages |
| 1. Avoids time on advertising and long listing 2. You get direct access to people with the right specialist skills 3. Someone else does a lot of the "sorting" process 4. You know the people will be well qualified | 1. It's an expensive option 2. You won't get people who are glancing through the paper on the "off chance" 3. It's only worth it for very specialist jobs |

d) **DOUBLE BUBBLE MAP :** For similarities and differences it can be useful to draw a double bubble map to help you revise. This one shows the similarities and differences between a vein or an artery. I've used diagrams to help "clue" your memory.

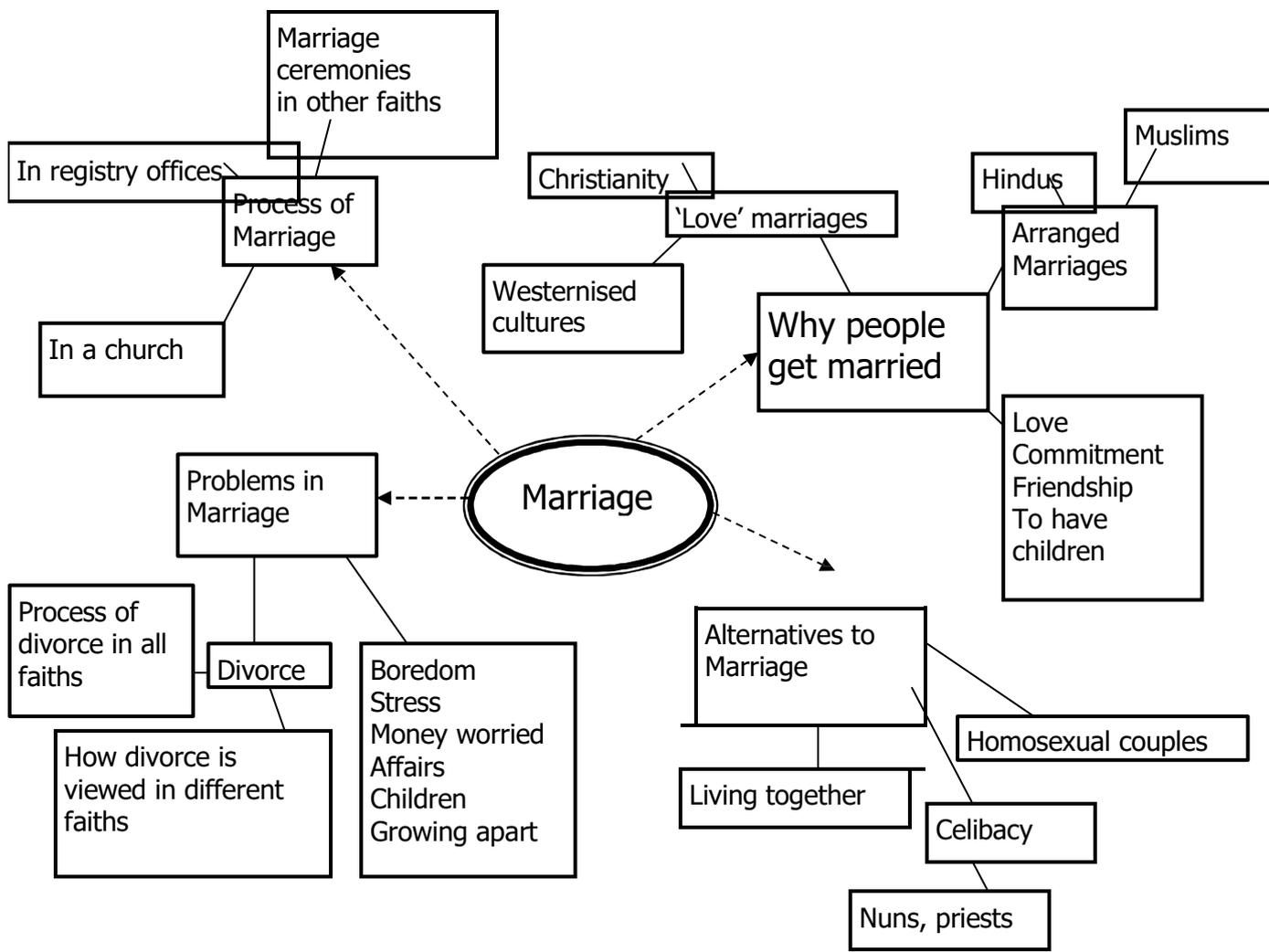


- e) **INFORMATION DIAGRAMS** or **"FLOW" THINKING MAPS** can also be used to explain something and therefore help you to remember it. This is often the case with geographical features or science experiments. An example would be a "cause and effect" diagram.

Put your statement in the middle, causes on the left and effects on the right. Again, little diagrams really help.



g) **SPIDER DIAGRAMS OR BUBBLE MAPS** can often help as a starting point for you to see how things are linked together. This one shows how all the different aspects of Marriage can be related together. This is not quite the same as a mind map – it's better as a starting point than having all your notes on it.



A useful link to help with map mind in word.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5XzFjjOpsR0>

Weekly Reflection/Review

Week Beginning:

What went well this week?

1)

2)

3)

List three opportunities for improvement?

1)

2)

3)

What activities are you most looking forward to in the upcoming week?

1)

2)

3)

Main targets for this week:

Week Beginning:

What would you make you feel fulfilled this time next week? How will you be able to achieve this?

FORTNIGHTLY PLANNING SHEETS

| Long Term Planner Week A: | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|--|---------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Things I need to do beyond school work. | | | | | | | |
| Time I've got to study or revise. | | | | | | | |
| Prep work I need to do. | | | | | | | |
| Subjects I'm going to revise. | | | | | | | |

| Long Term Planner Week B: | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|--|---------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Things I need to do beyond school work. | | | | | | | |
| Time I've got to study or revise. | | | | | | | |
| Prep Work I need to do. | | | | | | | |
| Subjects I'm going to revise. | | | | | | | |

WEEKLY PLANNING

Revision Plan for week beginning _____ (school week)

| Time | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|-------------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|
| 4.30-5.00 | | | | | |
| 5.00-5.30 | | | | | |
| 5.30-6.00 | | | | | |
| 6.00-6.30 | | | | | |
| 6.30-7.00 | | | | | |
| 7.00-7.30 | | | | | |
| 7.30-8.00 | | | | | |
| 8.00-8.30 | | | | | |
| 8.30-9.00 | | | | | |
| 9.00-9.30 | | | | | |
| 9.30-10.00 | | | | | |
| 10.00-10.30 | | | | | |

| Saturday | Subject | Topic | Reward | Sunday | Subject | Topic | Reward |
|----------|---------|-------|--------|--------|---------|-------|--------|
| 1-2pm | | | | 1-2pm | | | |
| 2-3pm | | | | 2-3pm | | | |
| 3-4pm | | | | 3-4pm | | | |
| 4-5pm | | | | 4-5pm | | | |
| 6-7pm | | | | 6-7pm | | | |
| 7-8pm | | | | 7-8pm | | | |