



5 Habits for Effective Revision

How the science of learning can improve your revision

Retrieval Practice

Questioning & Elaboration

Concrete Examples

Spaced Practice

Interleaving

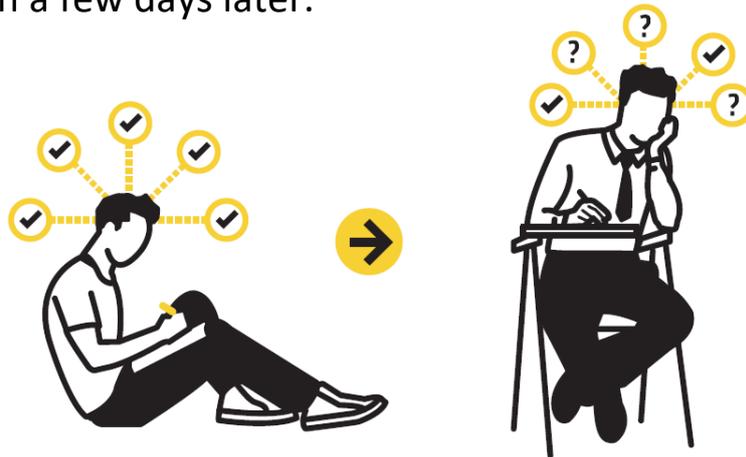


Adapted from 5 Habits of an effective learner available at www.chronotopeblog.files.wordpress.com

Retrieval Practice

What not to do!

Lots of research has shown that students think re-reading and highlighting are effective ways of revising. In reality they are often a waste of time and make you think you have learned something, when often you will forget that information a few days later.



Try a more effective way of revising

A far more effective way of revising is to put all of your notes away and test yourself on what you remember from a unit, topic or section. By regularly trying to retrieve the information from your memory, you will build far stronger memory of it in the long term.

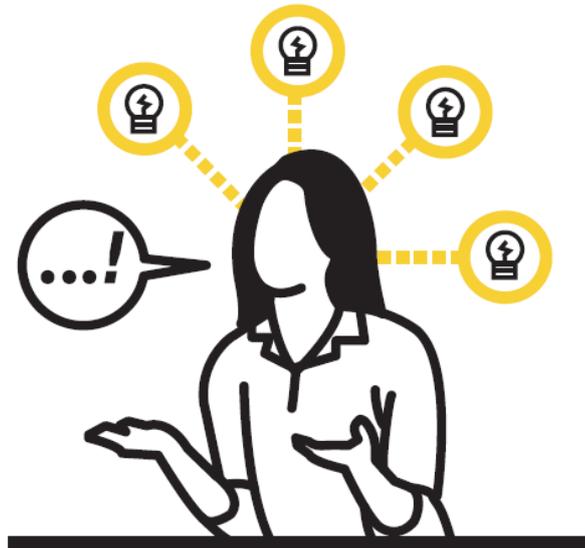
Try the steps below to complete retrieval practice.

Step 1	Make notes on all of the important information you need to know from a particular unit, topic or section.
Step 2	Close your books and put away your notes.
Step 3	Try to retrieve everything you remember either by writing it down or by telling it to a friend or parent
Step 4	Go back and check your answers against your notes from step 1.
Step 5	Look carefully for anything you didn't remember and repeat steps 2 to 5.

Questioning & Elaboration

What should you do now you have learned the information?

Two of the most effective things you can now do is to ask questions about what you have learned and then try to find connections between the different ideas and concepts. You can do this on your own, in pairs or even in a study group. The more information you have about a topic, the richer the conversation will be.



An example

Let's say you're revising Geography and you've learned lots of information about the Changing Urban Areas topic, specifically the Kolkata Case Study on problems of rapid urbanisation. Instead of asking what problems exist, ask yourself why the problems exist? Or how did this happen?

The reasons for doing it

By elaborating on what you have already learned, you will create new links and ideas and build a richer mental model of the topic you're studying with deeper understanding. This will help you to be even better prepared for answering the longer questions in exams that are worth more marks.

'Understanding is remembering in disguise'

Concrete Examples

Turning concepts and ideas into useable information

Sometimes when you have completed lots of revision you have all of these ideas and information in your memory but it can be difficult to actually use it in different situations. Having lots of information swirling around in your head doesn't always mean you can write it down in an exam in a way that will mean you succeed.



A useful way to use concrete examples is to study the best possible example of the thing you are trying to do, such as writing an answer to a longer type essay style question.

Ask your teacher for an A* standard answer and take it apart looking carefully at the pieces that make up an excellent answer. This will help you to put together all the ideas and information in your memory in a way that will ensure you succeed.

When analysing excellent answers, think about:

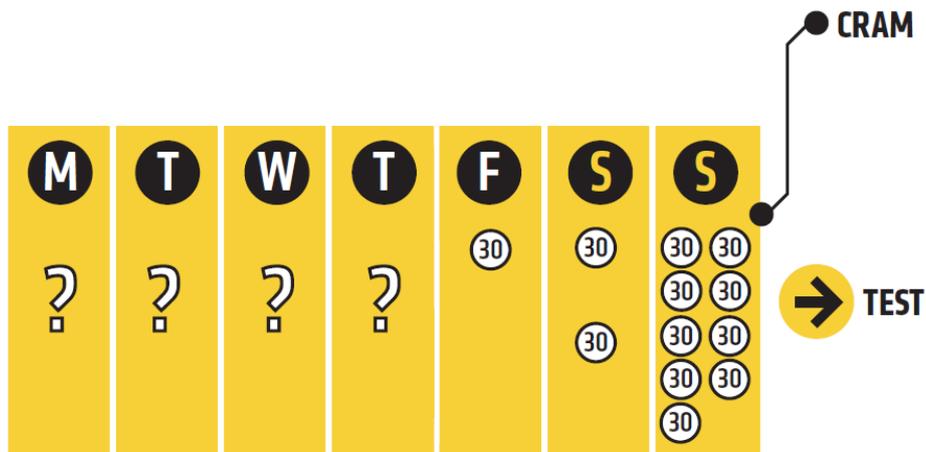
- 1 How has the answer been structured?
- 2 What key terms have been used?
- 3 What evidence and examples have been used to support arguments?

Spaced Practice

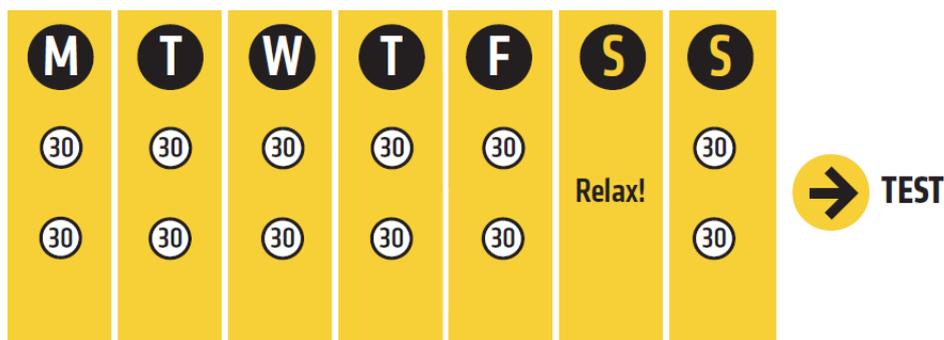
What should you revise and when?

Very often when it comes to revision we put it off until there is no other option than to do it at the last minute, in what is also known as 'cramming'. It often leads to lots of stress and means you won't remember everything.

Imagine you have a test one week and you have 5 hours to prepare for it broken down into 30 minute chunks. Often, your revision will look like this!



Instead of cramming, a much more effective way of revising is to space out your revision like this.



By breaking up your revision into 30 minute chunks and spacing out the time between revision, you will reinforce what you have learned and retain in your memory the information much more effectively.

Interleaving

More useful guidance on what to revise and when

Spaced practice tells us that leaving gaps between revision is very effective for embedding it in your memory. However, when study leave arrives and you're revising lots of topics within a subject or lots of topics within lots of subjects, what's the best way to choose what to revise?

The answer is interleaving and it means mixing up the topics you're revising and not revising all of the material for a subject at the same time.

Instead of your revision week looking like this:

M	T	W	T	F
Population and Migration	Changing Urban Areas	Contrasts in World Development	Managing our Environment	Fieldwork
Population and Migration	Changing Urban Areas	Contrasts in World Development	Managing our Environment	Fieldwork
Population and Migration	Changing Urban Areas	Contrasts in World Development	Managing our Environment	Fieldwork

A more effective way of organising your revision week would be like this:

M	T	W	T	F
Population and Migration	Managing our Environment	Changing Urban Areas	Fieldwork	Contrasts in World Development
Changing Urban Areas	Fieldwork	Contrasts in World Development	Population and Migration	Managing our Environment
Contrasts in World Development	Population and Migration	Managing our Environment	Changing Urban Areas	Fieldwork

By mixing up what you're revising and when, you will remember that information far more effectively because you will have to revisit it far more times with more gaps between.