**BASIC WRITING**

**Detail, Coherence & Unity**

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**2018 – 2019**

**Revision tips: getting organised**

**By making a plan and organising your time, you can divide your revision into manageable chunks. This will increase your chances of remembering the important things, help with better exam performance while avoiding last minute stress.**

What you need to know

Make your revision plan as early as possible. This will allow you to work out how much time to spend revising each day and just as importantly, when to take breaks. Find out when your exam is and work out how much time you have until then. If you don't know the date of your exam, ask your teacher. You can also search for exam dates online using the Interboard Examination Timetable.

Write a revision checklist

Start by dividing the number of days you have until the exam by the number of topics you need to revise. Ask your teacher for a list of topics, or make your own by going through your notes.

Think about any topics that will need more revision time - perhaps they are more detailed, or you found them more difficult than others.

Make a revision plan

When you know how many days you need to revise for each topic, you'll be able to make revision part of your daily routine. However, you need to be realistic about the time you have:

* mark on the plan those things you need to do, such as being at school and mealtimes
* split the remaining time into half-hourly slots
* break each topic on your revision checklist down into smaller pieces that can be learnt in 30 minutes, fill your slots with these pieces

You can find templates for daily, weekly and monthly planners at [Revision: timetables and planning(external link ope](https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/articles/zn3497h)

The [BBC BiteSize revision guides(external link opens in a new window / tab)](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize) will help you to break your topics down into 30 minute slots.

## Check your local library for resources

Your local library may be a good source for revision material. Curriculum support collections are available in 20 libraries across Northern Ireland. The collections are for anyone studying GCSE, AS and A2 level. They include study guides, revision guides, student handbooks and texts for a range of popular subjects. You can find out more at the [Librariesni website(external link opens in a new w](http://www.librariesni.org.uk/%22%20%5Co%20%22external%20link%20opens%20in%20a%20new%20window%20/%20tab%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

Reading your revision notes

When you look at your notes, keep in mind why you're reading them.

* reading for detail is when you need to gain a good understanding of the text and read it at a slower pace than normal and ask questions while you read, it might help if you read it aloud
* skimming is useful for getting the general idea of a large piece of text - read each paragraph quickly and identify the main ideas in each one
* scanning is used when you are looking for a specific piece of information - move your eyes quickly over the text, homing in on, sub-headings, names, numbers, dates and quotes for example

Look after yourself

If you're going to stay alert while revising regular breaks are important. A five-minute break every half an hour for you to stretch your legs is better than a 30-minute break after five hours' revision. Get up, make a drink, tidy your room, check the post - you'll come back refreshed and ready to carry on.

These breaks will also help you absorb the information and avoid overload. Include a leisure activity in your revision plan twice or three times a week in order to take your mind off things.

A healthy mind needs a healthy body, so look after yourself while revising. Lots of sleep and regular exercise will help you stay alert. Your body needs fuel, so eat plenty of easily digestible foods - fresh vegetables and fruit, for example, will help keep your energy levels up.

* [Eat well](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/health-and-well-being/eat-well)

Getting support

If you are experiencing emotional problems, such as issues with family or friends, or bullying, your revision might be affected and you may need to seek outside help. Try to get support before your revision suffers.

* [Dealing with bullying and getting support](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/dealing-bullying-and-getting-support)
* [Common parental concerns](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/your-childs-health-and-safety/common-parental-concerns)

More useful links

* [Careers Service](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/contacts-az/careers-service)
* **Top tips to help you revise effectively**

[*Your Student Life, Supported*](https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/studentlifecu/author/victoria/)

[*7 January 2019*](https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/studentlifecu/2019/01/07/)

* [Advice for Exams](https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/studentlifecu/tag/advice-for-exams/)
* [Cardiff student](https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/studentlifecu/tag/cardiff-student/)
* [Cardiff Students](https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/studentlifecu/tag/cardiff-students/)
* [Cardiff Uni](https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/studentlifecu/tag/cardiff-uni/)
* [Cardiff University](https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/studentlifecu/tag/cardiff-university/)
* [Cardiff University Student Support](https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/studentlifecu/tag/cardiff-university-student-support/)
* [counselling](https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/studentlifecu/tag/counselling/)
* [Counselling Health & Wellbeing](https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/studentlifecu/tag/counselling-health-wellbeing/)
* [Exam panic](https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/studentlifecu/tag/exam-panic/)
* [Exam preparation](https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/studentlifecu/tag/exam-preparation/)
* [Exam Revision](https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/studentlifecu/tag/exam-revision/)
* [Exam stress](https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/studentlifecu/tag/exam-stress/)
* [Exam Support](https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/studentlifecu/tag/exam-support/)
* [Exam Tips](https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/studentlifecu/tag/exam-tips/)
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* [revision](https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/studentlifecu/tag/revision/)
* [revision and exam strategies](https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/studentlifecu/tag/revision-and-exam-strategies/)
* [Revision tips](https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/studentlifecu/tag/revision-tips/)
* [Student Counselling](https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/studentlifecu/tag/student-counselling/)
* [Student Mental Health](https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/studentlifecu/tag/student-mental-health/)
* [Student Support](https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/studentlifecu/tag/student-support/)
* [Student Support Centre](https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/studentlifecu/tag/student-support-centre/)
* [student wellbeing](https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/studentlifecu/tag/student-wellbeing/)
* [Tips for Exams](https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/studentlifecu/tag/tips-for-exams/)
* [wellbeing](https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/studentlifecu/tag/wellbeing/)

#### Rachel from the Student Wellbeing Team shares tips on how to manage your revision time effectively.



It can be really hard to find self-motivation as the exam period gets closer. It requires a great deal of discipline and organisation to revise, especially when the joint demands of different courses or modules become overwhelming. Good planning skills can make these difficult times much easier to handle and help you keep on top of your workload in the lead up to exams.

#### **Here are some tips that may help…**

#### 1. Organise your work

Spending a couple of hours planning out your work in detail might seem like a waste of time, but in fact it will make your studying much more effective. You’ll be more productive, your work will be of a higher quality, you can keep track of what you’ve done and how much you have left to do, so that you’re less likely to worry about ‘falling behind’ or leaving things until the last minute.

The point of planning is to help you take control of your work – organising means you have to make things happen instead of waiting for things to happen to you. It helps you decide how to prioritise your workload, rather than letting yourself be carried along by deadlines. Because you’ve planned ahead you’ll be able to choose what to do and when. You may even find that you’ll enjoy your work more, it will build your confidence and give you more leisure time to enjoy.

#### 2. Plan your time

The key to effective time management is imposing structure on your working time by breaking it up. This works all the way from dividing up the structure of an academic year down to planning how to organise your day off or even just a free hour

**Do:**

* Work out how much time you have available and when
* List the tasks you need to complete
* Work out which of these tasks are the highest priorities
* Decide how long to spend on each task and set yourself targets
* Organise larger pieces of work (such as essays or revision) into smaller, less daunting chunks

**Don’t:**

* Try to do everything all at once
* Neglect any of your modules, even if you find them easy and especially if you find them difficult!
* Drift along from deadline to deadline. Carry on working on other modules while you write each essay and consider preparing for future essays or revision
* Let yourself be distracted



####  3. Get into a Routine

Planning at this level is mostly about developing a routine. This should be based on your own habits – you know when you’re most awake, when your housemates are out so you won’t be disturbed and how long you need to study for in order to actually get anything done.

At the start of the week, the weekend might seem forever away, but after all the things that take up your time there can be frustratingly little left. Here are some suggestions to help you make the most of the remaining hours:

* Use a diary to work out EXACTLY how much time you have available. Put on your planner everything from looking over lecture notes to tidying the house! Be realistic with your plan so that you can see how much time you really have to spend on revision.
* Write a ‘to-do list’ of tasks that need to be accomplished during the week. Some of these (such as going over lecture notes) can be done in odd hours here and there, whereas others (like essays) will need longer blocks of time devoted to them.
* Once you’ve decided on your tasks, allocate each to a day and time, based on how big and how urgent it is.
* Be flexible. If your schedule isn’t working, change it. If you don’t like where you’re studying, move somewhere else. Break up long study sessions into different tasks if you start to burn out.
* If the larger tasks are too daunting, start with something smaller.
* If you’re struggling for inspiration, skim through your lecture notes or textbooks.
* Draft your essays even if you don’t like what you’re writing – you can always change it later.
* You don’t have to write essays in order. If it’s easier, start with the main body and come back to the introduction and the title.
* Take responsibility for your work. Set yourself deadlines and stick to them.



#### 4. Time-saving Tips

There aren’t golden rules that work for everyone as we all study in different ways, but these general ideas might help you work out a system for organising your time:

* Don’t overdo it. It’s not sensible to plan to work until you drop, and working in irregular patterns or infrequent binges will lead to underperformance.
* Pace yourself and work out how long you can concentrate for before the effort starts to outweigh the benefits. Don’t push past this upper limit.
* Find strategies to help you deal with the times when you know that your concentration won’t be up to scratch. If you’re struggling to follow a particular piece of work make a note of it so you remember to come back to it later.

We hope some of this information is helpful during this stressful time. The moral of the story is that being on top of things, although hard in the short term, reduces stress and increases exam performance in the longer term. Planning and doing the work now is better than playing catch up, in terms of your studies and also your wellbeing. Keep a watchful eye on how you use your time and this can be enough to tip the balance the right way.

#### Watch our Relaxation videos for some techniques to help you reduce stress

#### Workshops could help!

The Counselling, Health and Wellbeing service run workshops that could help you overcome exam anxiety, stress and procrastination, such as:

**Dealing with Exam Anxiety (Online) Workshop**

**Mindfulness Drop-in Exam Stress Workshops**

If you don’t want to attend a workshop, some of these will be carried out online so you can learn strategies from the comfort of your home.

[Find out more and book your place](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/health-and-wellbeing/counselling-and-wellbeing/workshops)

#### Contacting Counselling Health and Wellbeing

If you are finding things difficult at the moment and you would like further support, please know that the Cardiff University Support Services are here for you – there is no problem too big or too small, and we offer a range of [flexible support options](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/support-and-services/health-safety-wellbeing/counselling-and-wellbeing/counselling-appointments/book-a-counselling-appointment) including:

* [Self-help resources](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/support-and-services/health-safety-wellbeing/counselling-and-wellbeing/external-resources)
* [Peer Support](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/support-and-services/health-safety-wellbeing/wellbeing-champions-programme)
* [Wellbeing Workshops](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/support-and-services/health-safety-wellbeing/counselling-and-wellbeing/workshops)
* [Courses and Groups](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/support-and-services/health-safety-wellbeing/counselling-and-wellbeing/groups)
* [Wellbeing Walk-in](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/support-and-services/health-safety-wellbeing/counselling-and-wellbeing/wellbeing-walk-in): Drop-in Service running Monday- Friday, 15:00-15:45, and Wednesday, 09:30-10:15
* [Counselling and Wellbeing Appointments](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/support-and-services/health-safety-wellbeing/counselling-and-wellbeing/counselling-appointments/book-a-counselling-appointment)
	+ Face to Face, Online or Telephone
	+ Bookable appointments are available via our [online referral questionnaire](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/support-and-services/health-safety-wellbeing/counselling-and-wellbeing/counselling-appointments/book-a-counselling-appointment).

[Watch our video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1AovuHUzaM) to meet our friendly and approachable staff, who will listen to you non-judgmentally, in a safe and confidential space.

If you are worried that you are experiencing physical symptoms that may be affecting your health, we strongly advise you to make a GP appointment to discuss this. If you do not already have a GP, please contact NHS Wales on 0845 46 47 or[check out their website](http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/localservices/gpinformation/) to view all of your GP options.

#### Your feedback and help please

Have you found this blog post useful?  Please help us by commenting in the comments bar below, and if there is anything further you’d like to know ask your questions there too.

We’d also be grateful if you can share this information by re-tweeting or sharing with your fellow students who may find this useful – you can do this by using the share buttons or via [twitter](https://twitter.com/studentlifecu)and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/studentlifecu/).

**Best wishes,**

**Rachel, Wellbeing Practitioner, Counselling, Health & Wellbeing Team.**



**Your Student Life, Supported.**

The Student Support Centre has a range of services dedicated to helping students make the most of their time at University, including: Advice & Money, Careers & Employability, Counselling, Health & Wellbeing, Disability & Dyslexia and International Student Support.

The Student Support Centres are located at [50 Park Place, Cathays Campus](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/directories/locations/view/50-park-place) and [Cardigan House, Heath Park](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/directories/locations/view/cardigan-house) Campus. For further details of services, events, opening times and more find us on the[University Intranet](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/support-and-services)

References

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/revision-tips-getting-organised>

<https://blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/studentlifecu/top-tips-to-help-you-revise-effectively/>