

Revision Preferences Guide

This guide aims to help you understand your revision habits and aid with the optimisation of your learning.

It is based on evidence from Dunlosky et al. (2013), who evaluated the effectiveness of 10 common learning strategies. Their research found that some widely used techniques (like highlighting) you may still be using have limited impact on the retention of knowledge, while others (like practice testing) are far more effective. You will read more about this later.

Please take a few minutes to use the following questions to reflect on your current revision habits and identify ways to study more effectively.

1. How do you currently revise?

Tick or list the main strategies you currently use:

Strategy	Yes / No
Highlighting or underlining	
Rereading notes or textbooks	
Summarising content	
Making flashcards	
Using mnemonics	
Explaining concepts to others	
Doing past papers or practice questions	
Mind mapping or diagrams	
Watching videos or listening to audio	
Teaching the material	
Creating songs or rhymes	
Other (please describe):	

2. What materials do you use to revise?

Materials	Yes / No
Lecture / workshop slides	
Textbooks	
Notes (your own or others')	
Flashcards (e.g., Anki, Quizlet)	
Recorded lectures	
Past exam papers	
Online videos (e.g., YouTube)	
Apps or revision websites	
Podcasts	
Other:	

3. What is your current study environment like?

Think about noise, lighting, distractions, comfort, and access to materials.

Describe it here:

4. What would your ideal study environment be?

Describe it here:

5. Do you study better?


Alone	
With others	
A mix of both	

If with others, what works best for you? (e.g., study groups, peer teaching, and accountability partners):

Describe it here:

6. How much time do you have to revise each week?

> hours/week

 Think.... How will you spread this over the week? To help prepare a timetable consider the following: No go times / 'red' times – these might be family time, work, regular leisure activities Sandwich / short sessions – times that can slot between broader activities Longer focused time – when would these sessions be? Do you need to negotiate this time with others (family, employer etc.)? Flexibility – consider swaps / switches for times when the energy / focus is just not there? Rather than X hours are timetabled could X minutes be ok? Be realistic here. Consider work, placement, home life, etc. go for what's achievable not what's ideal. Also timetable for breaks, enrichment time, and leisure activities etc. Balance is the key.

7. What revision strategies have worked well for you in the past?

Describe it here:

8. Do you currently use any of these highly effective revision strategies?

Strategy	Y/N	What it looks like in practice
Practice Testing		Actively testing yourself on the material — e.g. using flashcards, doing past exam questions, quizzes, or self-generated questions. Aim for recall, not recognition.
Distributed Practice		Spacing your revision over time rather than cramming. For example, revisiting a topic every few days instead of studying it all at once. Use a revision timetable.
Self-Explanation		Explaining out loud (or in writing) how and why something works as you study it. For example: “This equation makes sense because...”
Elaborative Interrogation		Asking yourself “why” something is true. E.g., “Why does X cause Y?” This encourages deeper thinking and linking new information to what you already know.
Interleaved Practice		Mixing up different types of topics or problems during a single study session (rather than studying one topic in a block). Helps improve problem-solving and transfer.

9. Do you have a preferred learning style or modality?

While learning styles aren't strongly backed by evidence, knowing what engages you can help motivation.

Visual e.g., diagrams charts	
Auditory e.g., podcasts discussion	
Reading/Writing e.g., notes textbooks	
Kinaesthetic e.g., doing roleplay	

You can explore your preferences using tools like:

VARK Questionnaire – <https://vark-learn.com/the-vark-questionnaire/>

10. Anything else you know helps you revise well?

Examples might include:

- Using colour coding
- Taking regular breaks
- Working in short, focused sessions
- Planning revision ahead of time
- Taking time out and prioritising other activities (leisure, relaxation, family, relationship time etc)

Describe it here:

NHS England (previously HEE)

Have produced the HEENE Exam Game Plan, comprising the following key resources [Exam Game Plan Resources](#)

1. An Exam Game Plan workbook resource: [here](#)
2. Exam Game Plan video series outlining exam preparation, procrastination, revision strategies, dealing with stress, anxiety and failure and top tips.
3. [Exam Game Plan worksheet](#) - Designed to be used with the videos below, this worksheet helps you craft a clear, achievable long-term life/exam plan. Break your revision into manageable steps, set realistic timelines, and track your progress with ease. Start planning today and give yourself the confidence to succeed!

About the research

Dunlosky, J., Rawson, K. A., Marsh, E. J., Nathan, M. J., & Willingham, D. T. (2013). Improving Students' Learning With Effective Learning Techniques: Promising Directions From Cognitive and Educational Psychology. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 14(1), 4–58.

Read summary on APS site: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1529100612453266>