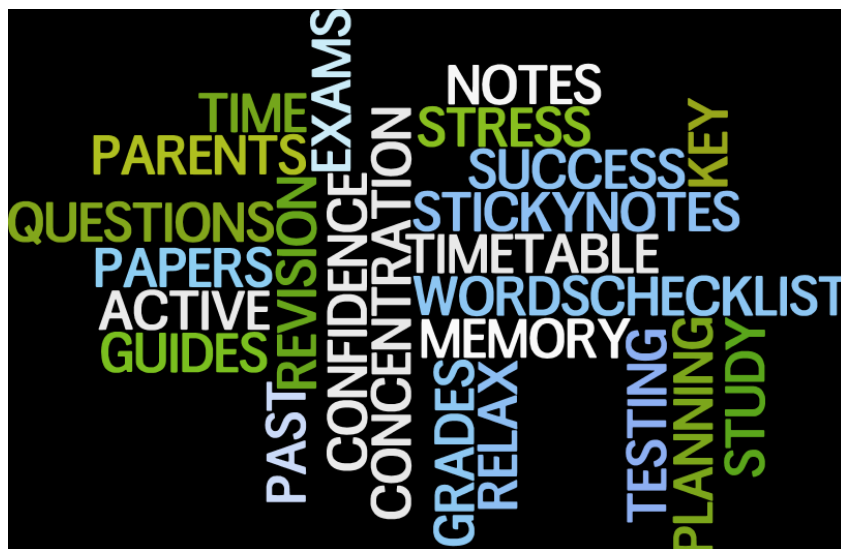




Oldbury Wells

Y11 Mock GCSEs November 2024

Advice and Guidance for Parents and Students



1) Doing Your Revision

Active or passive revision?

- Active revision means involving your eyes, ears and hands in a variety of ways. Revising actively is the best way to make sense of the material you're revising and also helps you to remember it.
- Active methods of revision include writing revision notes, reading notes aloud, recording key points onto your phone, discussing topics with a friend, testing yourself, getting others to test you, rewriting notes, doing examples, trying past exam papers and using revision websites. Use as many of these methods as you find useful.
- Passively reading through your notes and books is a very poor method of revision. It doesn't help you to understand or remember what you are revising. Don't just sit there reading page after page until you get bored!
- Find out what your learning style is and use techniques that will help you to remember more effectively.

Fill up the tank!

- Revising burns a lot of energy so it's important to eat properly and regularly.
- If you need to snack whilst working, try eating fruit or nuts rather than fatty foods.
- Drink water rather than fizzy drinks which are full of sugar.

Did you know?

Your brain uses 20% of all your body's energy.



When to Revise? What to Revise? How to Revise?

Plan revision time by subject - stick to it.

Mindmapping, PPQs, Note Reading, Revision Card Making, Self-tests, Collaborative Work.

General Revision Materials that Oldbury Wells students have access to.

GCSE Pod

Accessing the information is easy with your current Oldbury Wells login:
(first [name.surname@oldburywells.com](mailto:yourname.surname@oldburywells.com))

Click 'Forgotten Login Details' and a new password is sent to your inbox.

GCSE Pod offers a wide of podcasts for all subjects, including maths and both language and literature qualifications in English. Many of our students have made use of GCSE Pod already and have greatly benefitted from it.

Youtube

Most of us know Youtube has plenty of 'tragic' videos on. However there is a wealth of videos out there that are fabulous to help understand difficult concepts.

The difficult part is staying focussed on the task in hand.

Just a Quick Search in Google for the Subject, the Exam board and GCSE - away you go.

For English language and literature qualifications we thoroughly recommend [Mr Bruff's YouTube channel](#). We were fortunate to have Mr Bruff visit us last year and his videos have been invaluable in helping students to prepare for their English exams.

(A detailed guide of revision resources, plus guidance on how to prepare revise and cope with the examination period will be provided in the Spring term.)

Subject Specific Materials

GCSE English Language and Literature

Web based revision sites

BBC Bitesize: <https://www.bbc.com/education/examspecs/zxqncwx> (Literature)

<https://www.bbc.com/education/examspecs/zcbchv4> (Language)

This is an excellent free site website which includes video lessons for all set texts, including short, informative video clips; small test bites; extended explanations and sample exam-style questions.

Mr Bruff's YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/mrbruff>

A former English teacher and specialist with specifically tailored videos to suit the AQA English language and literature exams.

GCSE Mathematics

Mathswatch <https://vle.mathswatch.co.uk/vle/>

Mathswatch is an internet-based resource that requires a username and password. Students have all been provided with a personal login which will allow them to view videos and attempt practice exam questions on all topics.

Practice exam papers

Students will be given copies of practice exam papers which they can work through as an important part of their revision and exam preparation.

Web based revision sites

There are now many fantastic, free to use maths revision sites, including the 3 below.

Hegarty Maths <http://www.hegartymaths.com/>

This is an excellent free site website which includes video lessons for all GCSE topics. In addition it has video explanations to a number of old examination papers.

M4ths.com <http://www.m4ths.com/the-best-cd-borderline-page-ever.html>

This website has lots of videos with explanations about topics, as well as C/D grade questions to try.

Mr Barton's Maths <http://www.mrbartonmaths.com/gcse.htm>

This site has links to past exam papers and mark schemes, as well as written solutions for many. It also has some notes about topics as well as questions sorted by topic.

We recommend Casio scientific calculators. It is important that they have a scientific calculator to bring to maths lessons now, so that they can learn how to make best use of it before the exams.

GCSE Sciences

A variety of resources will be provided to ensure that every student is fully prepared for the Triple Science and Combined Science papers. These should be used to complement the work covered in class and will allow students to tailor their efforts to their own individual needs.

Previous and sample examination papers

Specimen papers are available on the AQA web site. There are a number of papers available for each Science subject. Last year's Science papers are not yet available on the web site but will be after April. This was the first year of the new exams so there are no other past papers that you can practise.

Web based revision sites – make sure you use AQA specific resources

BBC Bitesize: <https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/levels/z98jmp3>

This website has lots of summary notes and some videos to support you. The Combined Science is AQA Combined Science Trilogy. Triple Science are listed as the separate science subjects.

MyGCSEScience: YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/user/myGCSEscience>

A number of summary videos containing all the science topics in each science. Remember to select the AQA videos.

Physics & Maths Tutor: <https://www.physicsandmathstutor.com/>

A website covering all sciences with excellent revision notes, worksheets and practise questions.

Kahoot: <https://kahoot.com/>

Lots of interactive quizzes on different topics

GCSE Pod: <https://www.gcsepod.com/>

Access by Office 365 and school email, it provides online podcasts with practice questions to confirm knowledge and areas of focus for revision that matches AQA curriculum. The GCSE Pod Mobile App is great for short snapshots of content.

Pass My Exams: <http://www.passmyexams.co.uk/>

A good revision site containing notes and animations on all the Sciences

Seneca Learning: <https://senecalearning.com/en-GB/>

Free revision for your GCSE used by most science teachers as a revision tool and home learning, providing analysis of strength of knowledge & areas for improvement for each topic.

Purchasable resources

A scientific calculator - It is essential that your son/daughter has their own scientific calculator and that students know how to use it correctly – especially when rounding up numbers on calculations and recurring values for decimal points.

A ruler, pencil, rubber and black biro.

GCSE Business

BBC Bitesize: [GCSE Business - Edexcel - BBC Bitesize](#)

GCSE Computer Science

<https://www.gcsepod.com/>

GCSE Music

Bitesize with Teacher guidance:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/examspecs/zbmct39>

Cambridge National in Sports Studies Revision Guide

<https://bit.ly/3Wq7KiO>

GCSE Design and Technology

PG Online power point presentations and worksheets

GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition

Bitesize with Teacher guidance

<https://www.foodafactoflife.org.uk/>

GCSE Drama

[GCSE Drama - AQA - BBC Bitesize](#)

GCSE History

GCSE Pod

GCSE Physical Education

eRevision – Online resource arranged through school.

GCSE PR

All students have revision guide given to them at the start of the course.

Revision resources will be given in class for specific units

GCSE Geography

eRevision: Online resources on the school's student OneDrive '**GCSE Geography Spec B revision support**'

GCSE pod Edexcel Specification B

Exam board website:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/geography-b-2016.html>

GCSE Spanish

GCSE Pod: Spanish (revision skills, exam skills, grammar)

AQA website: Past papers (listening, reading, writing, speaking)

Quizlet: For vocabulary (listening, reading, speaking)

Lyrics training, Spotify, Youtube, Netflix and other online platforms to watch content in Spanish, subtitled in Spanish to get familiar with phonics and pace (culture, listening and speaking)

Organising Your Revision Sessions

Location, Location

- Think about where you do your revision – is it somewhere quiet and comfortable (but not too comfortable!)
- NOT in front of the TV
- Get everything together so it's close at hand
- Fresh air and natural light are good

Avoid distractions!

- If it helps, listen to music but play it at low volume and choose something that won't distract you. If you do find yourself singing along, then you are distracted!
- DO NOT be tempted to keep checking your 'status'.
- DO NOT answer text messages immediately!
- LOG OFF Facebook and Twitter and leave your phone in another room

Understanding

- Understanding a topic helps you to remember information and structure answers more easily.
- First break the information down – a simple way is to consider the overall theme, the main ideas then any details.
- Then put it back together so you can see the whole picture! A bit like doing a jigsaw puzzle

Aiming For Top Grades

Practice Makes Perfect

- No athlete ever turns up for a match / race without putting in hours of training first.
- No performer ever goes onto stage without first having a dress rehearsal.
- You need to look through past exam papers so you can get used to how the questions are asked and how many questions from each section you need to be answering.
- Take every opportunity to revise – revision is a skill that needs practising, the more you do it the better you get. Make it a habit right from the beginning of your GCSE course to take every opportunity to revise. Revise for classroom tests, end of unit tests, end of year exams and especially pre-public exams and mocks.
- Attend the revision sessions at lunchtime and after-school.
- Use exam board websites. On them you will find the specification for each subject (a list of the topics you need to cover and details of the exams), past papers, mark schemes and information on level/grade boundaries. Check with your teacher which exam board each subject is taken with and the exact specification you are working to.

Sitting your Mock Exams

- Only attempt light revision the night before using your revision notes and try not to do any totally new revision.
- Be organised - Get all your equipment ready that you will need (i.e. pens, calculator, ruler, etc.) the night before. The last thing you want in the morning is to be rushing around trying to find things.
- Try to get a normal night's sleep (if you can!)
- Get up in plenty of time and make sure you try and have something to eat and drink – now's a good time to fill up your water bottle to bring with you.
- Check you have everything you need before you leave home.
- If you really want to, do some last minute revision by flicking through your revision notes.
- Compose yourself – the moment you first open your exam paper is always a bit of a shock. The exam never looks or reads quite the way you expect it to, so be prepared for this.
- Don't worry about your classmates who may already be scribbling away.
- If it helps you, write down anything you are afraid of forgetting.
- Read the whole paper through carefully, noting all the instructions given and the number of choices – if it helps underline them.
- Decide on your question order then start by answering the questions you know you can answer well. This gives you more time to think about the difficult questions and boosts your confidence.
- Timing – How long is the exam? How many questions do you need to answer and how much time is allocated to each answer?
- Understanding – What are you being asked? It's worth spending time getting to grips with command words e.g. describe vs explain.
- Question choice – Read all choices and answer the correct number in each section etc.
- SPG – Some marks are awarded for spelling, punctuation and grammar. Practice difficult spellings so you don't lose marks.
- Read every question at least twice, picking out key words – if it helps underline them.
- Think about the question and analyse it before you get into your answer. Get a sense of how long and detailed an answer is expected to be – use the number of marks awarded to help you with this.
- For long detailed answers outline the main points you intend to include. Without this you are likely to stray from the point or forget important points.
- Remember to stick to what the question is asking!



Coping With Exam Stress

- Be prepared - Make sure you know what you are supposed to have learned and that you have all your notes, books and essays to hand. Do you know what format the exam takes and how the marks are allocated? If not, ask your teacher and/or study the marking scheme, which is often on the exam board's website. This can be particularly important with GCSE stress, when there are so many exams, all structured in different ways.
- Know when and where you work best - Work when you are most alert. We all have slightly different body clocks – are you a night owl or a dawn lark? Everyone has different revision styles – maybe you like to sit at a tidy library desk or under the duvet with your laptop. Wherever you feel calm and in control is the best place for dealing with exam stress.
- Take a break - Psychologists suggest that we can only concentrate properly for about 32 minutes at one stretch, while neuroscientists tell us that the longer we try and focus on one thing, the less our brains are able to deal with it effectively. Take breaks to stay refreshed. Instead of cramming in more revision or, indeed, stressing over how to deal with exam stress, the best thing might simply be to do something completely different.
- Eat well - Keeping your blood sugar levels steady so that you don't have energy dips during the day and can sleep well at night is a vital way of dealing with exam stress. Avoid lots of processed, sugary foods like cereal, biscuits, sweets and chocolate.
- Drink well - Staying hydrated with lots of water, low-calorie sodas or herbal teas is key to feeling alert. Juices or sugary drinks can make you feel jittery and mess up your energy levels. Caffeinated tea and coffee perk you up, but stick to about five cups a day, and if you feel jittery or have problems sleeping, drink your last one in the late afternoon. Bear in mind that colas, energy and sports drinks may all contain a lot of sugar and caffeine.
- Get exercise - This is probably one of the best ways of dealing with exam stress. Anything from walking the dog to going for a swim, run or bike ride helps reduce physical tension that can lead to aches and pains, and releases natural feel-good brain chemicals. If you can't get motivated, rope in friends – it's much harder to make excuses.
- Sleep well - Tossing and turning the night before an exam is understandable, and our bodies are able to cope with lack of sleep for a day or so. Worrying about not being able to nod off only makes matters worse.

A hot bath and having somewhere dedicated just to sleeping (and not to watching TV or going on a computer, phone or tablet) will help you switch off. If you really can't get to sleep, do something repetitive like a jigsaw or ironing.

If you really, really can't sleep, don't panic. Sheer adrenaline will help you get through most exams the next day better than you might expect.

- Relaxation - If you are really anxious, find a calm, quiet space and try breathing deeply in and out for a few minutes, focusing your mind on something pleasant, like a beautiful place with happy memories – anything that helps you wind down.
- Talk about it with someone - Almost everyone finds exams stressful – so you are not alone. Expressing your worries to a good friend, family member, your school tutor or a student counsellor will help get them out of your system.
- Reward yourself - Build in treats to your timetable – anything you can look forward to as a reward for sticking to it. Plan something exciting to celebrate the end of the exams.

Exam Information: Be Prepared

- You must be on time for all your examinations.
- Equipment to be brought to **EVERY** exam:
 - **Clear pencil case or bag**
 - **Black pens**
 - **Pencil**
 - **Eraser**
 - **Pencil sharpener**
 - **Ruler**
 - **Coloured pencils**
 - **Calculator (apart from non-calculator Maths paper)**
 - **Protractor**
 - **Compass**
- You may have a clear drinks bottle, but all labels must be removed.
- Glasses cases should be put onto the floor along with calculator lids.
- You will be under exam conditions as soon as you enter the examination room which means complete silence. You must not talk to, attempt to communicate or disturb other candidates. This will also be the case when the exam has finished and until you have left the exam hall.
- All mobile phones should be switched off and in your bag, not on your person. Possession of a mobile phone or other unauthorised material is breaking the rules, even if you do not intend to use it and you will be subject to penalty and possible disqualification.
- No watches of any kind will be permitted. Please remove and leave in your bag or hand in to an invigilator as you enter the exam hall.
- You must follow the instructions of the invigilator.