

## Preparing For Success

Dear Students,

Top tips from Knole Academy to prepare for exams.....in whatever format they may come!

### 1. Create a revision timetable

Haven't we found that routine works? It gives us purpose and direction in whatever we are doing. It can help us to break up seemingly **HUGE tasks into BITE SIZE chunks**. Planning out your revision will allow you to chip away at subjects without having to worry at the last minute.

### 2. Flash cards are your friend

Just reading your textbooks and notes will give you the false perception that you know your study material better than you really do. Instead, write down questions and answers on a stack of flash cards and test yourself by going through these flash cards. Flash cards are a great form of self-testing, which **promotes active recall** that has been scientifically proven to boost and reinforce learning.

### 3. Set your timer

I find that my mind wanders sometimes. I catch myself checking my phone for notifications or checking in with Instagram. Try setting a timer for **25-30 minutes** and work without distractions in the room. Leave your phone outside. You'll be surprised how much you can do!

The timer also ensures you schedule in a much needed break. Your brain is like a muscle and if you work it hard it will get tired. 10-15 minute rest breaks are important. Stand up, get some fresh air. It will **improve your focus and effectiveness** during study periods.

### 4. Choose your snacks

Choose healthy snacks to boost brain power. Fruits and vegetables are best for keeping your brain active. Fresh berries are more beneficial than crisps. Have an oat bar instead of a chocolate biscuit. Oats release slow energy so you won't experience the sugar rush followed by the crash. Choose water instead of a soft drink. Your brain is 73% water so feed it what it wants! Making some good food choices **boosts your cognitive function and keeps you more attentive**.

### 5. Perfect practice makes perfect

When was the last time an exam room had music playing in the back ground? Do you study with music? It might make study less painful, but it will **hurt your recall skills**. If you need noise, choose natural sounds or music without lyrics and play it quietly.

Use past exam papers to see what type of questions come up again and again. You will notice topics that examiners love to test you on, and you'll learn about the topic at the same time! When you want to test yourself, try setting out an exam condition room. No phone, no noise, right time of day – that is 9am! The closer you **match conditions the better prepared** you are 😊!

## 6. Sleep!

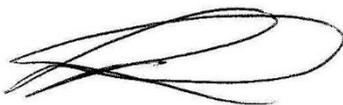
I love sleep. It creates neural pathways and **reinforces memories** created during the day. Aim for a full night's sleep before any exam. Sleep the amount that is normal for you. Why not try a quick cram before bed? Instead of checking into social media, read one set of flash cards. It may just be the first new memory your brain creates that night!

All night cram sessions are self-sabotage! Cramming works, to a point, but not at the expense of sleep. A lack of sleep makes you fatigued the next day and your attention span diminishes. No one would choose for this to happen in the middle of an exam, so **set yourself up for success** and get a good night's sleep the night before.

Remember that this stage of your education is one that your parents went through too. Ask for help and listen to advice. The more information you have, the more choices you have. **Balance your study with sleep and exercise.** The world is yours for the taking!

Good luck in your examinations, however they may come!

Kind regards,



**Mr Lloyd**

Head of Year 11  
Knole Academy

1. *Memory for Semantically Related and Unrelated Declarative Information: The Benefit of Sleep, the Cost of Wake. Published online 2012 Mar 22*
2. *Nick Pernham, 2010. Background Music can Impair Performance. Applied cognitive psychology*
3. *Learning science: Actively recalling information from memory beats elaborate study methods. National Science Foundation. Published January 21, 2011*
4. *Grace Chan. 7 Must-Eat Brain Foods to Get You Through Exams. Eduadvisor.my Published 18 Oct 2018*