Active Revision Techniques
So often time and marks are wasted by not reading a question correctly or by ‘waffling’, it is important that you recognize and understand the command words within the question before you attempt it to maximize your marks:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Command Word</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describe</td>
<td>To provide a detailed account of a topic and give reasons for it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain/Give Reason For/Account For</td>
<td>To give a clear account of your knowledge and understanding, or give reasons for why something is so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare</td>
<td>To show how two, or more, things are different or similar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyse</td>
<td>To identify important features of a subject and separate it into parts and examine how they relate to one another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarify</td>
<td>To give reasons for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider</td>
<td>To examine all the negative aspects of a topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criticise</td>
<td>To examine all the positive and negative aspects of a topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate</td>
<td>To examine and give evidence to support an argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss</td>
<td>To examine by giving positive and negatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>To discuss the worth, importance or usefulness of something by giving evidence to support your view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore</td>
<td>To follow the development of something systematically from its origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrate</td>
<td>To provide the main points, showing the main structure rather than great detail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpret</td>
<td>To make compatible that which appears to be in conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justify</td>
<td>To give evidence which supports an argument or idea. Show why decisions or arguments were made considering objections others may make</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline</td>
<td>To provide a detailed description with examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>To express briefly and clearly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarise</td>
<td>To give a concise account of the main points omitting detail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggest</td>
<td>To expand your knowledge and understanding to a topic you are not necessarily expected to know well and to transfer other knowledge to give a sensible account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List</td>
<td>To gather information from a map or graph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete/Finish</td>
<td>To add information to a map or graph – Consider scale and using the right shading</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are a number of memory techniques which may help you to develop a more effective memory. However, before you set out remembering everything in sight, it is important to CONDENCE what you need to learn. CONDENCING your work and identifying KEY WORDS are the first step to committing it to memory.

Depending on the subject you are studying, these might be:

- NAMES
- PLACES
- DATES
- FACTS/FIGURES
- SEQUENCES

When you have identified the keywords, underline them or mark them with a highlighter. It is a good idea to use several pens of different colours. You could even develop a system that uses different colours for different information:

- RED: PEOPLE
- GREEN: PLACES
- BLUE: FACTS & FIGURES
- YELLOW: QUOTATIONS
- ORANGE: DATES

Spend about 10 – 15 minutes learning your list of keywords until you are confident you can recite the list (Also that you know what each word means!!!)

Then, in the weeks leading up to your exam, spend about 5 minutes on 2 or 3 occasions to check through the list again. Nearer to the exam, check how well you have remembered the keywords. You should find it easy to recall the list again with only a few minutes revision.
The key to your memory is imagination. When you watch television, you expect to see a programme that captures your imagination. Unfortunately the things you need to remember for your exams don’t tend to possess the contents of a Hollywood blockbuster!!!

Image chains are an imaginative way to remember a list of random words by linking them to a story. The trick is to be imaginative and creative – the more so the better.

Use positive, pleasant images. The brain often blocks out unpleasant ones. Exaggerate the size of the important parts of the image. Use humour. Funny or peculiar things are easier to remember. Rude things are also easier to recall.

Symbols can be used. Bright, colourful images are easier to remember than dull ones. Try to use all the senses in your story by using sounds, smells, tastes, touch movements and feelings as well as pictures.

Example:

Spice  Potato  Dance  Window  Plant  Finger  Bin  Wet  Purple  Log

One day a spicy purple potato was dancing on a log but it was wet because it had been raining and so he fell off and knocked the plant off the window with his finger and it fell in the bin.

Your turn…

Tree  House  Dog  Pencil  Cheese
Take the first letter of each word you need to remember and use them to make an imaginative sentence. You should use this type of memory strategy to help you remember things IN THE RIGHT ORDER. You have used this one before:

Richard
Of
York
Gave
Battle
In
Vain

Naughty
Never
Elephants
Eat
Squirt
Shredded
Water
Wheat

Try it yourself the continent of the World:

Europe
Asia
Africa
Oceania
Antarctica
North America
South America

Europe
Asia
Africa
Oceania
Antarctica
North America
South America
When you have stopped giggling…

The ‘PEE’ technique, needless to say, has nothing to do with, yes well…., this technique should form the basis for each and every main body paragraph of any essay you write in any subject.

Each paragraph should open with a point; this should support the statement already stated in the opening paragraph. It needs to clarify and obviously develop the essay’s overall argument.

Following this opening point, you need to explain it better and show how and why you think it supports your overall view. This means giving an example from the text (often a quotation, stage action, etc.), graph or map.

An explanation is now needed to prove your point by explaining how the examples effects the resource like you have said it does and what it means.

**Types Of Evidence**

- Oral
- Visual
- Written
- Physical

The ‘TART’ technique is a clever way to remember what should be included with in an opening paragraph for an English essay…

Can you think of a similar way this can help you in other subjects, for example answering a case study question in a Geography exam?
This is a very effective way of representing large amounts of information in an attractive, easily-remembered way. You may have used a ‘spider diagram’ – which are very similar

◊ Use a large piece of paper turned landscape

◊ In the centre write a name of the topic that you are going to revise – and add a simple illustration if you wish

◊ Now draw lines like branches (coming out from the centre) to represent the main areas of the topic. Each of these can be illustrated or could be in different colour – or a different type face

◊ In turn, each of these could sub-divide into several more sections. Continue adding more branches until all the main information is on the mind map

◊ Finish your mind map could contain diagrams, names (and pictures) of important people, dates, places, etc. If it gets to crowed, you could create a separate mind map for that particular section

Mind maps start with a theme, have main ideas and are held together with details

To make mind maps more memorable:

◊ Use doodle, pictures and diagrams

◊ Use different colours

◊ Use different type fonts

◊ Use humour (cartoons), etc

◊ Design your own (don’t just copy other peoples)

◊ CONDENCE

Your turn:
Case studies maybe the vain of your life, but you can guarantee you WILL have questions which will require both vague and detailed answers to show your understanding.

They help to bring a theory to life and make the real worked more engaging. They illustrate key points, key messages and how things are done in practice, but there is a lot of detail to remember so to break this down, as well as mind maps, a case study card can be used.

For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section Of Syllabus:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location:</td>
<td>Town/City/Region:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What?</th>
<th>What were the causes?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facts And Figures:</td>
<td>How can the changes be managed or solved? By whom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What were the effects?</td>
<td>What are the options for the future?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key Words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>Genre:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Characters and Relationships:</td>
<td>Synopsis:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Chapter Plot:</td>
<td>Author Techniques:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Quotes:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Separate subjects could be printed on different coloured paper, or each corresponding section in the same colour font.

Try making case study dominos or snap cards...
1) Don’t know and I don’t know that I don’t know
Unconscious
Incompetence

2) I don’t know stuff and I realise that I don’t know it
Conscious
Incompetence

3) I am beginning to get it and when I concentrate really hard and I know I am beginning to get it
Conscious
Competence

4) I know it and I can do it even without having to think about it
Unconscious
Competence

Your turn:

Work with a partner and each take a turn to do this exercise:

Think of a time when you were very motivated to do something and it was a challenge and you achieved it. (it could be in work in school, learning a sport, something in music or art)

How did you keep yourself motivated (wanting to stick to it and keep trying) so that you moved from box two to box three and box four

How did you overcome any setbacks you experienced?
Organising how, where and when you are going to revise is very important and varies for everyone. Good advice is to write out a timetable which you can stick to no matter what the subject.

**Warm up your brain**

It is always a good idea to warm your brain up before you start to revise. Try some of these:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What If...?</th>
<th>Invent A Name</th>
<th>It Does What??!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>◊ The moon was made of cheese</td>
<td>◊ A shampoo that instantly gave you curly hair</td>
<td>◊ Oxyputer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◊ All the grass disappeared overnight</td>
<td>◊ A robot that takes your dog for a walk</td>
<td>◊ Kangastep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◊ Water was poisonous</td>
<td>◊ A pair of glasses which shows you what’s happening behind you</td>
<td>◊ Aquadigger</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Set a target and time**

Decide what you want to accomplish by the end of your study time and set little targets within this time. Try not to be unrealistic to avoid rushing and missing key points.

**Set a reward**

When you have set a target and time frame think of a reward you can enjoy when, and only when, these are met. This could be anything from chocolate, playing a computer game or meeting up with friends.

**Choose a suitable place to revise**

Only you know where you work best and won’t be easily distracted, try to think of a place, or better a couple of places, where you will not be tempted to check Facebook, your phone or top up your drink, etc.

**Plan in breaks**

Plan breaks at sensible intervals when you can stretch your legs, get a drink and have a short change of scenery. Booking in your lunch break to have a shorter afternoon session than the morning session will make the time go faster. Also consider any programmes you may want to watch – Can you watch them another time on Iplayer?

**How well did you do?**

When your time is up look over your progress, have you accomplished all you set out to do? Is there anything you could add next session? Is it time for your reward?
“There is no such thing a failure – Only feedback”

Everyone gets nervous before an exam and has different ways of dealing with it. Stress is not essentially the problem but how you respond to it, below are some ways which can help you to relax and concentrate both before and during the exam:

**Visualisation**
◊ Visit the exam room so you are familiar with its set up
◊ Keep visualising the journey from your house to the exam room

**Relaxation**
◊ Start from the toes: Clench for ten seconds and R-E-L-A-X
◊ Move up the body, clenching and relaxing

**Breathing**
◊ Empty your lungs out and hold for as long as possible
◊ Then breathe in slowly and as easy as possible

**The Three Minute Breathing Space**
Your breathing space provides a way to step out of automatic pilot and reconnect with the moment at hand

**Awareness**
Bring yourself into the present moment by deliberately adopting an erect and dignified posture. If possible, close your eyes and ask: “What is my experience right now…in thoughts…in feelings…and in bodily situations?”

Acknowledge and register your experiences, even if it’s unwanted

**Gathering**
Then, gently redirect your full attention to your breathing, to each in and out breathe as they flow, one after the other

Your breathing can be used as an anchor to bring you to the present and help you to tune into a state of awareness and stillness

**Expanding**
Expand the field of your awareness around your breathing, so that it includes a sense of body as a whole, your posture and facial expression
Write down your concerns
This immediately helps you to feel calmer and more objective

Ask the key question: Are these worrying thoughts helpful?
If they are drawing your attention to something that needs dealing with, then start the pattern for dealing with things in the next three points below:

Face the worst
What’s the worst that could happen? Write it down. Now write down a few ways you’d cope if it did happen. Create a plan A and an alternative plan B, then think of the ways to make the worse less likely

Get the facts
Worry can arise from confusion, or trying to make a decision without enough knowledge. Imagine you are collecting all the facts for someone else will help you stay calm and objective, or try to imagine you’re a lawyer, whose job it is to stay impartial

Analyses the facts once you have them
Decide what to do. DO IT!

Use your night thoughts
When you’ve a worry, your mind goes on thinking about it during the night. Lie still for a few minutes when you wake to give helpful ideas a chance to drift into your mind