MIDDLEWICH HIGH SCHOOL

MIDDLEWICH HIGH SCHOOL

Revision and Retrieval Strategies for Assessments and Exams

Preparing well for exams and assessments depends on how effectively students can recall and apply what they have learned. To do this, they need strong revision and retrieval skills. The more secure their knowledge becomes, the easier it will be for them to prepare for exams – and the more confident and successful they will feel.

Every child learns and revises differently, but it is important that they quickly find the methods that work best for them and use these consistently. Developing these skills early means that by the time they reach Year 11, they will already be confident and experienced in revision and retrieval.

At its heart, revision and retrieval is simply about active, effective learning. As a school, we focus on three key strategies that are proven to make a real difference: flash cards, mind maps, and Cornell notes.

This booklet will guide you and your child through each of these strategies, offering practical ideas to help make revision more effective at home.

ASPIRE
BELIEVE
BELONG

ASPIRE
BELIEVE
BELONG

WHAT IS OUR MHS APPROACH TO REVISION?

A consistent approach to revision across all subjects delivered by all teachers.
Effective use of the academic and the personal development curriculum to ensure students are highly skilled in their ability to prepare for, revise and complete all assessments and examinations.
Consistent language used by all staff when discussing revision and retrieval.
Deliver revision and retrieval skills to parents via the Parents TLC to allow parents to understand the MHS approach to revision, allowing them to support their child.
MHS Revision and retrieval skills will be taught as part of the KS2 transition to MHS and throughout the KS3 curriculum to ensure a smooth transition to KS4 and examination courses at GCSE.

STRATEGY 1: FLASHCARDS

- Using flashcards is a repetition strategy.
- They are a simple 'cue' on the front and an answer on the back.
- Flash cards engage 'active recall'.

How do you use flashcards?
1. Ensure that the Flashcards have a question or key term on one side and the answer or definition on the other.
The flash card must work the memory.
If flashcards only contain notes then no retrieval practice will be happening.
2 Ensure the right questions and knowledge are on the cards.
3. Keep information as short as possible.
4. Write clearly. You should be able to read what you wrote at a very quick glance.
5. Use different coloured cards or pens to categorise your flashcards. For example, use a different colour for each subject or topic. This can help your brain to categorise information easier.
6. Make your flashcards as soon as you've learned the topic in class.

Why do flashcards help you to learn?
There are many reasons why flashcards can help you learn.
They help you 'recall' information - this creates stronger connections for your memory.
They help you to memorise facts quickly.
Drilling - flashcards help you to practise the same information over and over again - and as we know, practice makes perfect.
They promote self-reflection which ingrains your knowledge into your memory.
When you make and use Flash cards you take control of your own learning.
You have to decide what to put on each card, how often you're going to use them and then evaluate how well you know the information on each card.
By doing all these things you are using 'metacognitive processes' which have been proven to enhance long-term learning.

ASPIRE
BELIEVE
BELONG

STRATEGY 1: FLASHCARDS

How to use Flashcards - the Leitner Model (Youtube)

Anki App - Produce digital flashcards

Why you might be using Flashcards wrong (BBC)

STRATEGY 2: CORNELL NOTES

The most effective form of revision is when you reduce and transform your knowledge. One of the most effective ways to do this is in the form of note taking. A highly effective form of note-taking is Cornell notes.

How do you use Cornell Notes?

The 5 R's of Cornell note-taking are:

Step 1: Record.

During the lesson or revision session record in the main column as many meaningful facts and ideas as you can.

Step 2: Reduce.

As soon after as possible, summarise these facts and ideas concisely in the cue column.

Step 3: Recite.

Step 4: Reflect

Step 5: Review.

How to use Cornell Notes

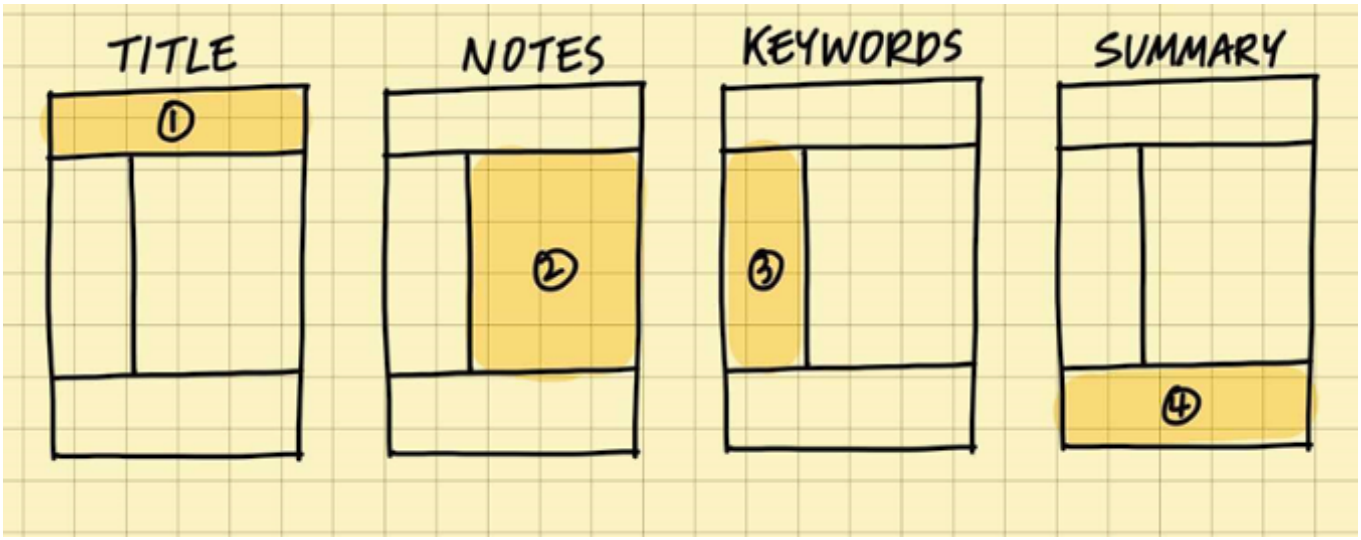
Why do Cornell Notes help you learn?

Cornell notes help students learn because they turn note-taking into an active process. Instead of just copying information, students organise it in a way that makes it easier to remember and review.

The page is divided into four sections. On the right, they write their main notes. On the left, they add key words or questions linked to those notes. At the bottom, they write a short summary of what they have learned.

This layout has three big benefits:

- Active thinking: Writing key questions and summaries makes students process the information more deeply.
- Self-testing: By covering their notes and using the questions or key words, they can quiz themselves – which is proven to strengthen memory.
- Quick revision: The summaries and cue words make it easy to review learning later, without rereading everything.



ASPIRE
BELIEVE
BELONG

STRATEGY 3: MIND MAPS

Our third and final strategy is Mind maps. Again, the aim of this strategy is reduction and transformation. The greater the connections you can make between ideas, the more likely it is that it will 'stick' in your memory.

How do you use mind maps?

The 7-step guide is as follows:

- Step 1: Brainstorm a Central Idea.
- Step 2: Use images if you feel that this will support your memory.
- Step 3: Colour Your Map if you wish to.
- Step 4: Create Connections.
- Step 5: Make Your Branches Curved.
- Step 6: Use Single Keywords.
- Step 7: Replace Words With Pictures.

How to make mind maps

Why do mind maps help you learn?

Mind maps are powerful because they turn information into a clear visual picture. Instead of writing long lists or paragraphs, a mind map shows how ideas link together, with one main topic in the centre and branches for key points and details.

This helps in three ways:

- Makes connections: By linking ideas visually, students can see how different pieces of knowledge fit together. This makes information easier to understand and recall.
- Supports active revision: Creating a mind map forces students to think about what's important and how to organise it, rather than just copying. They can then use the map to quickly review topics before an assessment.

In short, mind maps help students learn because they combine visual memory with active thinking, making revision more engaging, organised, and effective.