Revision Tips

Here are some revision, exam, and general study tips taken from our GCSE History Student Books. They are aimed primarily at students taking GCSE History but teachers may also find them very useful.

Think like a historian!

- Exams don’t just test what you can remember – they test your skills as a historian too.
- Make it clear that you understand how the use of different evidence and sources can lead to conflicting interpretations.
- A good GCSE student gives a balanced view. Bear in mind that different historians have different views on topics.
- Think about how different factors link together.

Use the book!

- Know how – and why – hospitals first developed. Take a look at GCSE History: Medicine Through Time by Aaron Wilkes.
- Studying GCSE Medicine Through Time? Make sure you know how a medieval doctor might treat illness. Take a look at GCSE History: Medicine Through Time by Aaron Wilkes.
- Studying GCSE Germany 1918–1945? Ensure you know how the Great Depression helped Hitler rise to power. Take a look at GCSE Germany 1918–1945 by Aaron Wilkes.

Module ‘must-knows’

- Studying GCSE Germany 1918–1945?
  Make sure you:
  • know why the Berlin Olympics can be viewed as both a success AND a failure for the Nazis.
  • understand why World War Two changed many people’s views on the Nazis.
  • remember! An ordinary German’s view on Hitler will depend on their circumstances: different people have different views and opinions.

- Studying GCSE Medicine Through Time?
  Make sure you:
  • ensure you understand that prehistoric medicine is based on supernatural thinking.
  • learn what ‘public health’ means – it’s used a lot in this course.
  • ensure you know how the Renaissance affected the development of medicine.
Exam speak

- GCSE examiners often ask you to ‘outline’ a topic. Generally, ignore the minor details: focus on the most important aspects.
- ‘What was the impact of World War One on Germany?’ Make sure you practise questions that use the word ‘impact’ – examiners love them!
- GCSE exam question words:
  - ‘discuss’ – Think whether there are two sides to the question/argument and consider them both.
  - ‘describe’ – Write in detail about the event/situation, giving lots of key facts.
  - ‘evaluate’ – Use your knowledge/the information in front of you to judge the importance/success of something.
  - ‘justify’ – Write down the main reasons to support an argument or action.
  - ‘compare’ – Are there important differences between things? You might be asked which is best, and why.
  - ‘summarise’ – Bring together the main points in a short, sharp paragraph or two.

What type of learner are you?

- Visual, auditory or kinaesthetic learner? Use a variety of revision styles to get your brain buzzing!
- Are you a visual learner? Organise your notes into colour coded sections, writing key facts in a bold colour.
- If you’re a visual learner, try writing the things you need to remember on wall charts and posters to hang around your bedroom.
- Auditory learners! Record your revision onto your iPod and play it back to yourself.

Revision techniques

- Use mind maps when revising complex topics like the Treaty of Versailles. It helps you to identify and understand how bits of information fit together to build up the ‘big picture’.
- Find out about a person’s background – it can give you an insight into the development of their character and actions in later life.
- Try studying in a group and discussing your revision with friends. Talk about the things you have just learned and understand.
- Try not to read large amounts of text all in one go – you won’t take it all in!
- Be organised, make a realistic plan you can stick to – and stick to it!
- Create an overview of what you want to revise and break each subject down into manageable chunks.
- Set definite start and finish times for your revision sessions, with a clear goal for each one.
- Do something completely different during breaks – make a cup of tea, have a chocolate biscuit, or dance around your bedroom!
- Take frequent breaks when you are studying – you’ll be amazed how much more you get done if you revise in short bursts!

Exam day is here!

- Make sure you get an early night the night before – don’t stay up revising!
- Stay hydrated – if you are 5% dehydrated, your concentration drops 20%!

Find out more at www.oxfordsecondary.co.uk/gcsehistory