

# Revision: Why bother?

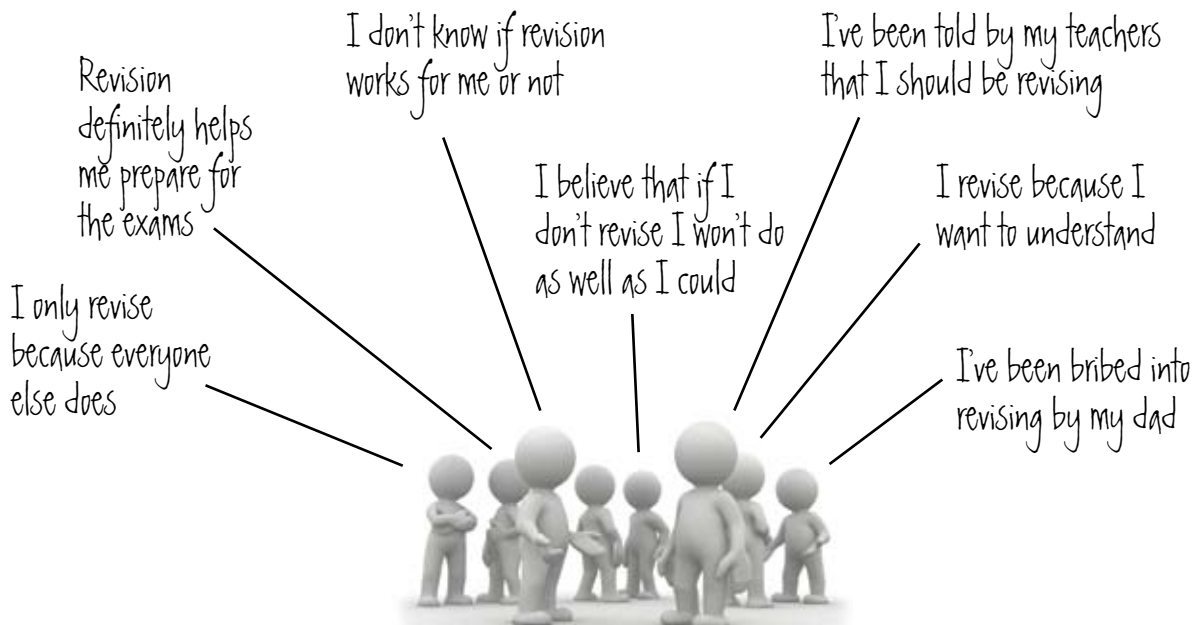
Revising is so familiar that many people have never stopped to consider why they bother or whether it works. There are lots of possible reasons for deciding to do some revision – some of which are better than others.



- Why should I bother to do well in exams?
- Why do I need to do revision for exams?

## ACTIVITY

Look at the following statements. Circle or highlight the ones that apply to you.



Which of the answers do you think gives the best motivation for revising?

.....

Doing well in exams can bring a sense of satisfaction and reward, and wanting to understand something is a good enough reason for revising a topic.

From a more practical point of view, a good reason for wanting to do well in exams is because the better qualifications you have the more money you are likely to earn.

## ACTIVITY

Study the information in the table and then answer the questions below.

### AVERAGE LIFETIME EARNINGS

... if you have A-levels or other level 3 qualifications:	<b>£1,233,024</b>
... if you have GCSEs at grades A–C or other level 2 qualifications:	<b>£1,022,112</b>
... if you have level 1 or other foundation qualifications:	<b>£978,848</b>
... if you have no qualifications:	<b>£873,392</b>

Source: Labour Force Survey, 2007

- 1 How much more money are you likely to earn if you get level 1 qualifications rather than no qualifications?  
.....
- 2 How much more money are you likely to earn if you get good level 2 qualifications rather than Level 1 qualifications?  
.....
- 3 How much more money are you likely to earn if you get level 3 qualifications rather than Level 2 qualifications?  
.....
- 4 Assuming that your working life is 40 years, how much more money per year are you likely to earn if you get good level 3 qualifications rather than no qualifications?  
.....

There is usually more than one reason why students decide to revise. If these reasons motivate you, then revision is more likely to be effective and effective revision will help you maximise your exam success.

# Thinking positively about revision

Think of yourself as an athlete preparing for a big race: preparation and the right frame of mind are essential to success. You can get into the 'zone' for revision and exams, just like athletes get into the 'zone' for a competition. How much success do you think an athlete would have if they thought negatively about their likely performance? It doesn't have to be that way...



➔ How can I think positively about revision and exams?

## ACTIVITY

A group of friends is discussing revision and exams. One half of the group is totally negative about the process – their words are on the left. The responses of their friends are missing – can you write in their more positive replies? The first has been done as an example:

Revision periods are lonely and dull

Not if you plan some group revision, and give yourself some rewards too



"Some people are naturally better at exams than others"

"You either know your subject or you don't, there's no point in trying to learn for an exam"

## Thinking positively about revision

"You just have to accept that revision is going to be boring and get on with it"

"I get too stressed to do well in exams"

"You can over-prepare for exams"

"I always know I'm going to do badly so I don't bother to prepare"

"I just hope for the best – I never have a target to achieve"

"Exams are always such a surprise – it's not possible to know what might come up"

"Someone's got to fail – I know it will be me"

Thinking positively about your revision and exams will improve your motivation and likely success.

# Sharing problems at exam times

Revision can be a lonely and stressful business. Most revision takes place alone and it can get you down.

But it doesn't have to be that bad – there are things you can do to avoid these problems or to cope with them if they arise.



➔ How can I get support during revision?

## ACTIVITY

Which 'supporter' would you advise these students to go to? Draw a line between the student and which supporter you feel is most useful in that situation (you can choose more than one).

### Will

I'm OK at preparing revision materials and learning them. I've got revision cards ready but I need someone to use them to test me.

Reason for choice

### Tom

I'm so disorganised I don't know where to start. I'm panicking and not doing anything useful at all.

Reason for choice

### Rachel

I'm very confident about most of the course, but I feel like there are chunks missing and I don't know how to fill them in.

Reason for choice

### Amanda

I can't sleep, can't eat and am getting really anxious

Reason for choice

### Sofina

I really need to discuss the topics in order to learn them well – I can't do that on my own!

Reason for choice

Parent

Friends who have set up a revision group

Teacher

Best friend

Doctor/  
counsellor

Someone else?

If things get really bad the youth advice organisation Get Connected has a website at [www.getconnected.org.uk](http://www.getconnected.org.uk) and a helpline on 0808 808 4994. The Samaritans can be reached at 08457 909090.

# Enjoying revision?

**O**K OK, it's not something most people would do as a matter of choice but there are things you can do to make revision more enjoyable. And if you get some enjoyment, it's probably going to be more effective.



→ Is it possible to enjoy revision?

To be highly motivated for revision you have to believe that it's possible to for it to be interesting. You also need to believe that the ability to learn is something which can be developed, and that exam success is not simply a matter of natural ability. In fact there is evidence to suggest that students who believe they have untapped potential do better in exams than other students.

## ACTIVITY

**Think of a subject you need to revise for. Read the following statements and tick the boxes to show how much you agree or disagree.**

	1 Strongly agree	2 Agree	3 Not sure	4 Disagree	5 Strongly disagree
1. I have a good reason for revising this subject	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I enjoy learning about this subject	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I believe I can succeed if I revise well	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I use more than one method to revise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I don't revise for too long at one time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I believe that some aspects of revision can be enjoyable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I believe that revision can help me reach my potential in the exam	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Intelligence is not fixed and you can change it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. It is possible to change your ability level in a subject	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I don't feel stressed or nervous about revising this subject	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. I have enough time to make revision enjoyable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Turn over to analyse your results →

Total score.....

### **Less than 25**

You have a positive attitude to revision in this subject so it's likely that you already find revision interesting and at times enjoyable. Keep going and remember to give yourself enough breaks and rewards.

### **26 to 40**

Maybe you need some convincing that revision for this subject can be enjoyable and is worth doing? Your answers indicate that you do understand some key points about learning and exam success but need a strong focus between now and the exams. Remember that everyone can improve their learning and that exam success is likely to make a big difference to your eventual job and pay. Try some unusual types of revision to get you interested and consider working with friends who are also revising.

### **More than 41**

Sounds like you need some motivation! Remember that everyone can improve their learning in any subject, however negatively they may feel about it. Also, think about the future – exam success is likely to give you more job choices and more pay. Try some unusual types of revision to get you going – can you use the things you're interested in to help with revision? For example, learn a list by associating the first letter of each point with a football team that shares the same first letter. And how about working with friends who are good at revising?

# Avoiding revision

There are so many good excuses for not revising! It's amazing how many TV programmes are unmissable, how many dogs eat notes, how many other days there are before the exam...

Look at the following reasons why students put off revising. What advice would you give them that might help them get started?



→ How can I stop avoiding revision?

"My memory doesn't work very well"

"I don't know where to start"

"Revision is boring and I don't enjoy it"

"I don't have a complete set of course notes to work from"

"I can never remember what I've been reading"

"I like to do it all in a rush at the last minute"

"There's no point revising because I'm rubbish at exams"

"I don't have any revision materials"

"No-one else has started yet"

"There is so much stuff that I know I can't learn it all"

Take another look at the list. Have you used any of these excuses? If so – should you follow your own advice?