



Testbourne Community School

TCS Year 10

Prepared for Exams



Information for Parents and Students

Achievement • Excellence • Integrity



TCS Exam Preparation

GCSE examinations

The GCSE specifications which our students now study are undoubtedly more challenging and involve a lot more content being memorised than ever before. The sheer volume of material that students need to memorise means that revision is a long-term process and not a last-minute fix. Unfortunately, we cannot learn the content for our students, they need to spend many hours learning the key words, formulae, statistics, quotes and concepts for themselves. There are no short cuts to revision and recalling information and therefore for students to be successful, they will need to put in the hard yards.

The Year 10 exams give students a taste of what it is like to have a series of back to back examinations across the breadth of the curriculum. Students need to spend time revising and preparing for these exams so they can find the most effective way for them to memorise information. Often there is an element of trial and error whereby students try different revision strategies and then settle upon the ones which yield the best results in plenty of time before their real GCSE exams. Like all skills, revision takes practice and the Year 10 mocks are an ideal opportunity for this.



Provisional Exam Plan



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Core exams will take place in the main exam venues – the Theatre Hall and Sports Hall. This will allow you to experience what it is like to sit your exams under JCQ exam conditions. Although this may be daunting at first, it means that by the time you sit your real GCSE exams, you have become comfortable and familiar with the routines and expectations. Students who have been tested and are entitled to Access Arrangements will have these in place.

Mock exams do cause disruption to lesson and learning time so we will try to minimise the impact of this. Your core exams will take place during core lessons. Your option subjects will have their exams during their double lessons. This means classes are not disrupted by half the students missing or arriving late because they have been in another exam.

Success in mock exams is not about cramming in revision the night before. Successful students revise over an extended period of time which means they can plan for any extra-curricular activities or social events. These can still be enjoyed and can provide a welcome break from studying if revision plans are put in place.



What are the expectations for mock exams?

GCSE exams are taken under very strict JCQ rules. This ensures that every student in the country sits their GCSE exams under the same, fair conditions. At Testbourne our mock exams are designed to replicate these rules so students become accustomed to them and therefore find the experience less daunting in the real thing. The JCQ 'Information for Candidates' and other guidance can be found on our [website](#).

We will take you through all the key information during an assembly but here are a few top tips:

- Keep your exam timetable safe – it gives you all the details you will need – day, time, room. Your exam timetable will be emailed to your school email account approximately one week before. We suggest taking a photo of it on your phone when you receive it.
- Turn up promptly to the tennis courts 10 minutes before your exam is due to start.
- Don't be late!! There are strict regulations that we have to abide by regarding lateness and depending on the exam you may not be allowed entry into the exam room. The start time published on your timetable is the time at which you begin answering the paper therefore you need to be lined up on the tennis courts well in advance.
- Line up according to your seat number and the signs on the tennis courts. You need to know your seat number before your turn up to the tennis courts but can always check the exams noticeboard if you forget.
- We line up in silence and Heads of Department will usually deliver a pre-exam warm up.
- Full school uniform must be worn to all exams.
- Bring your clear pencil case to all exams with all your equipment (black non-erasable pens only) and calculators (without their cover) where appropriate.
- Water bottles should be clear and have labels removed.
- If you have a locker then you must put your bag in there or find an alternative safe place before coming to the exam room. No bags are allowed in the exam rooms.
- Your phone/iPod/MP3 player/ watch are not allowed into the exam room. If you bring any of these items into a mock exam you will get zero for that paper.
- You must also remove any headphones and tie long hair back.
- From the moment you enter the exam room you are under exam conditions.

If you have any worries about the exam process, please speak to Mr Tiley or Dr Wilson. You can also find information in the [Exam Wellbeing folder](#) on our website.

Equipment for mock exams



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Being prepared for exams is really important. It reduces any pre-exam nerves and allows you to achieve the best marks possible on the papers. We do not lend students equipment in exams. If you haven't brought the correct equipment you will have to re-sit the exam again after school with the right equipment at a later date.

All equipment must be in a clear plastic pencil case. This is so invigilators can see that no additional notes are within your pencil case.

Students with severe medical conditions who would normally have medication on them (inhalers, epipens, diabetic kit) should ensure they are in a clear plastic (freezer/zip lock) bag.

Calculators should have the memory cleared before any exam. Any calculator lids or covers should be removed. You are likely to need your calculator in Maths but also in Science, Business, Geography and DT therefore it is best to bring it to most exams.

Exam pencil case checklist

- Ensure you have **several** black, non-erasable pens
- Highlighters can be used to highlight the question but cannot be used to write answers with
- Pencils
- Sharpener
- Rubber
- Ruler
- Protractor
- Compass
- Scientific calculator
- Clear plastic pencil case
- Spare hair bands if you have long hair

If due to personal circumstances such as financial hardship, you are unable to source these items, please speak to Mr Tiley.

How can families, parents and carers support?

There is lots of evidence to emphasise that attendance in school is essential to success at GCSE. Headaches, minor coughs and colds shouldn't stop students from



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coming into school.

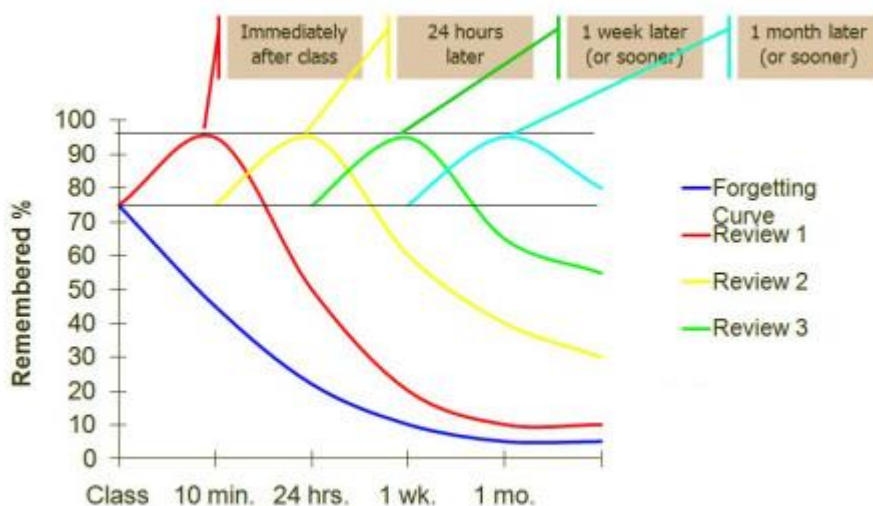
It is important to have breakfast before coming into school and ensure you bring plenty of water (in a clear bottle with no label). In the warmer weather it is important to stay hydrated so you can concentrate. Sometimes longer exams may run into a break time therefore it is wise to bring food with you just in case.

Putting your revision timetable somewhere central in your house, such as pinning it on the fridge, means that your family can help remind you. If everyone knows when you have exams they can wish you luck and support you.

Good quality sleep is essential to a successful school day and exam. Please encourage lights out (and Wi-Fi off!) at a sensible time and impose limits on games and screen time late at night. Removing phones or tablets during revision time is a good plan because it reduces the distractions and can then be used as a reward for breaks.

Revision and exam preparation at home is a lot of hard work. There are no short cuts and it isn't easy, however it is a relatively short period of your lives which will require this intense effort. Students inevitably forget information, so the regular revisiting of information and regular low-stakes quizzes and quick tests is really important. We show students 'The Forgetting Curve' to demonstrate the importance of revising content several times to ensure it stays in our long-term memory. Only 50% of information learnt on day 1 is likely to be remembered the following day, therefore revisiting it and learning it again a 2nd and 3rd time will improve the amount retained. To allow students time to do this, revision has to be a long-term task which starts today.

If you have concerns about a particular issue during the next few weeks, please do get in touch with the relevant teacher, tutor or Mr Tiley as soon as possible. Often concerns can quickly be resolved with swift intervention.



What do

Some students believe that using mind maps, flowcharts, and spider diagrams or claim they revise by re-reading and highlighting. These are all proven to be fairly ineffective and give students a false sense of security. Please challenge your sons/daughters to revise by using proper mind maps (see Tony Buzan on YouTube),



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completing past exam questions (with or without their books/mark schemes) and doing quizzes. Parents can really help by offering to quiz their child at the end of their revision time for a few minutes. The act of recalling that information for the quick quiz will help it stick for longer.

Which revision resources and techniques are good to use?

We have some fantastic resources which really make it easy for students to test themselves.

Subject revision lists – Your teachers will soon be uploading revision lists onto Teams and Sharepoint for you to use. They are helpful to plan your revision into a revision timetable. BBC bitesize has some great tips in putting together a revision timetable, click [here](#) to find out more.

Past papers – These can be accessed from the exam board websites.

Pearson/Edexcel [Past papers](#) | [Past exam papers](#) | [Pearson qualifications](#)
AQA [AQA](#) | [Find past papers and mark schemes](#)
OCR [Past papers materials finder - OCR](#)

Mind mapping [How To Mind Map With Tony Buzan \(Using 3 Simple Rules\)](#) | [MindMaps Unleashed](#)

Revision websites

www.mymaths.co.uk
www.bbc.co.uk/education
www.kerboodle.com
www.memrise.com
www.quizlet.com
www.duolingo.com (MFL)
www.focusonsound.com (Music)
www.studentartguide.co.uk (Art)

GCSE Pod

What is it?

- One website, 3 apps and over 6000 Pods
- Can be used on mobile devices, tablets and PCs
- Short 3-5 minute clips



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- Helps with learning, homework and revision
- Selected material for our exam boards
- It is free for Year 10s and Year 11s in Testbourne

How does it work?

- You can create personal playlists
- You can download specific playlists to listen to offline
- Consistent use in just 10-minute chunks is proven to support achievement right up to a grade 9
- Each pod has a subject expert reading and explaining everything clearly and precisely. The pods include facts, quotes, keywords and annotated diagrams on screen.
- You can complete 'check and challenge' activities which will quiz you on the GCSE pods you have just watched. They will self-mark to give you instant feedback.



My Courses

Keep yourself organised by viewing a list of your upcoming exams in subject or date order. View an exam playlist to see all the Pods relevant to that exam, select the areas you find tricky and download to watch on the way to school.



Playlists

Create a new playlist, give it a name, add some Pods and save. Watch the playlist online to brush up on your knowledge or download it and take it out and about with you on your device.




Check & Challenge

Test your knowledge on Pods by completing quizzes and questions. Receive instant feedback on your answer with helpful tips to help you understand why it's right or wrong.

How do I get started?


Activating your GCSEPod account through Office 365

1 Go to www.gcsepod.com and click 'Login'






2 Click the Office 365 button:

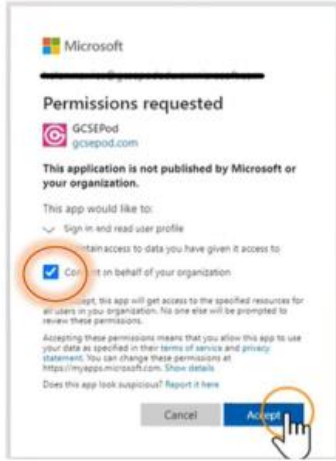


On the next screen click the Office 365 button again or enter your email and click 'Login'

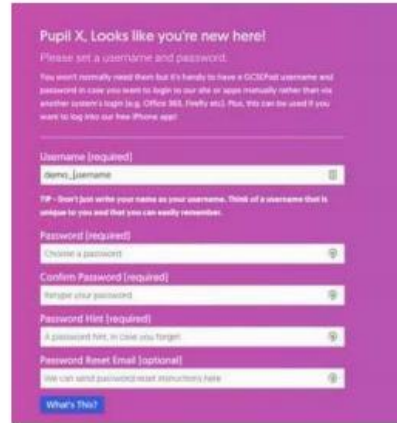




3 Tick the consent box on the popup and then click 'Accept'.



4 You'll need to fill in a few details here and set a password to use with our GCSEPod app.



5

You're now logged in and ready to get started!

The next time you sign in you just need to **repeat steps 1 and 2** to sign in again.

KNOWLEDGE ROUND-UP

Test your child on their Pod knowledge with some of these general questions



GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. What did you learn from watching the Pod?
2. What will you remember?
3. Tell me 3 key words you have learned from the Pod.
4. Tell me everything you know on the topic.
5. How confident do you feel on the subject?
6. Do you think you need to learn more on that subject?
7. What part of the Pod interested you the most?
8. What was your favourite part of the Pod?
9. Teach me what you've learned
10. Where you surprised by what you've learned?
11. What was your least favourite part?

TIP

Print out this page, take it everywhere you go and ask questions when you're in the supermarket, in the car, cooking dinner...

TIP

Think of some specific questions on other subjects, like photosynthesis, algebra or WWII



HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD USING GCSEPOD



What is GCSEPod?

GCSEPod is an award-winning expert in subject knowledge. We provide 3-5 minute bursts of audio-visual, teacher written learning which can help to reinforce and consolidate key GCSE topics covered in lessons. Experts read and explain everything clearly including all the right facts, quotes, keywords, dates and diagrams on screen.

Tips and Tricks

Watch online or offline

Ask your child to download Pods to their mobile device so they can learn on the go!

Favourites

Challenge your child to 'favourite' 10 Pods on topics they find difficult.

Watch the Pods together and use one of our other suggested learning techniques to help simplify what it is they're struggling

Personalised Playlists

Use the My Playlists area to create bespoke playlists.

Having personalised playlists means your child has fast access to Pods that will help fill knowledge gaps.

Support Homework

GCSEPod isn't just for revision, it's to help expand your child's subject knowledge.

If your child is struggling with a piece of homework, you can search for the topic on GCSEPod and use the Pods as an additional resource.

Memory Cards

Watch Pods together and then write down key facts, dates, diagrams and quotes.

Test their knowledge to see how much they remember.

Check & Challenge

Use our unique Check & Challenge feature to challenge your child to win at least 10 diamonds for each C&C they complete.

See if they can beat their previous score each time!



Revision strategies

There are so many ways you can revise but very few have been proved to be effective.

In essence it is about learning a lot of information by heart. Whatever notes you make, you then need to be able to memorise them.

-Use technology such as GCSE Pod, Seneca and the resources from your teachers which are on Teams/Sharepoint.

· Write out mini quizzes to test your memory and understanding of certain topics. Get parents, siblings and friends to check you can answer them.

· **Flash/revision cards** – use index (small) cards to write down questions with answers on the back and test yourself or test someone else.

· Tell **someone about what you have learned** – explain how the heart works over a meal (or perhaps stick to something less gory!).

· **Get people around you to test you on 'rote knowledge'** – have a family quiz.



· When you have revised and revisited each topic, **have a go at some past exam questions**

Storing information in your memory

1. Retrieval practice – anything that forces students to come up with answers to questions.
2. Space out learning – Little and often is better.
3. Interleaving – vary the type of problem and question.
4. Combine pictures and words – reduce cognitive overload.
5. Don't listen to music.
6. Don't re-read material or highlight – these can be done on autopilot.
7. Teach the material to someone else .