



Effective revision

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Transcript

Introduction: Welcome to this tutorial on effective exam revision brought to you by Reading University's Study Advice team. It is designed for you to go through at your own pace and you can pause it at any time.

Slide 2: Sometimes exam revision can seem like an uphill struggle and with such a huge mountain to climb it can be difficult to know where to start.

Slide 3: Breaking huge tasks down into more manageable steps can sometimes help and with exam revision it might be helpful to look at these steps as: defining what is it that you need to revise; considering issues as to when you should be revising; and finally looking at strategies you should employ to revise effectively.

Slide 4: Throughout the revision process it's important to remember that the purpose of revision is to answer an exam question. So you need to think about this in terms of selecting what you need to revise. And the purpose of exams is to test your application of knowledge. So you need to ensure you revise actively and make sure that you make use of what it is you are learning.

Slide 5: So firstly, what should you be revising? When faced with a pile of notes from various different seminars, lectures and your reading, it can be difficult to know where to start. In most exams you are not expected to write everything you know on a topic, so it is important to be selective. Looking initially at your module break down would give an indication of the topics that are covered and you can begin by highlighting a number of topics for your initial stages of revision. The key here is to ensure that you cover enough to be able to sufficiently answer the exam questions and allow you some flexibility. It is therefore important to look at what topics within your module are key to your subject and this would give an indication of those that you need to get a firm grasp of.

Slide 6: One way to do this would be by looking at past papers for the module, by looking on exams website. Going back over a number of years you can begin to recognise some themes and concepts that are often tested and strategically what areas fit well

together to offer you the coverage that you need. Make sure you allocate time to revise these topics within your plan.

Slide 7: Once you know what it is you need to revise in terms of topics, concepts and theories, you need to consider when you should be revising. People who leave exam revision to the very last moment and cram rarely do well in university exams. Instead you should see revision as more of a marathon with a sprint at the end rather than just a fast sprint to the finish line.

Slide 8: This requires you to think ahead and set yourself some mini weekly targets. Exam revision is best if it's built up so consider increasing the amount of time you spend on revision the closer you get to the exam. Getting your notes in order, printing off past papers, making sure you understand the concept and ideas are all important preparation activities that you could set yourself as targets leading up to the full on revision weeks.

Slide 9: When thinking about what you should revise, it's also important to consider how you personally study best and using this knowledge to build up a plan will help you ensure you are most effective. Consider when in the day you are most effective: are you someone that is motivated and the most alert in the morning or are you more of a night owl? Are you somebody who gets distracted at home, and would prefer to work in a library environment? Do you prefer to have home comforts around you? Be honest here and think how best you can avoid distraction and procrastination. Also are you a multitasker who needs to change topic frequently to remain engaged? Or do you prefer to concentrate solely on one topic at a time in some depth? All these things should impact on how you plan your revision timetable.

Slide 10: Making a weekly timetable can ensure you keep on track and it's important you consider all the above influences when constructing it.

Firstly, put in all your fixed activities and then the remaining time you can choose when to allocate time for revision. It's important to make sure your plan is realistic and that you have blank spaces in your plan for any overspill and contingencies. Do make sure you put in regular breaks and give some consideration to how you motivate yourself through this period.

Slide 11: We are all motivated by different things, so make sure you reward yourself and use your distractions as motivators to help keep yourself going.

Slide 12: The final step is to look at how best to revise. Reading through your notes over and over again, even with the use of a highlighter, isn't an effective use of your time, nor is it very engaging.

Slide 13: Instead you need active revision techniques not only to ensure that you understand the material but that you are able to link your knowledge to prior understanding and attach meaning to your learning. Applying your knowledge to a past question helps with this and remember that exams are about testing application of knowledge not memory.

Slide 14: Making mind maps, using images and linking ideas and concepts together therefore works well for many students. Whatever you do make sure your notes are

memorable and they show how ideas and concepts link together. All these are active techniques which can help with understanding and memory recall.

Slide 15: One thing that you should be doing as part of your revision plan is to use past exam questions to help your application of knowledge and get you used to answering exam style questions in exam style conditions.

Summary: Exams are an anxious time for many students but we do hope by following these tips of defining of:

- A) What you need to be revising,
- B) When you should be revising and
- C) How you will revise

will help you reach your ultimate goal of exam success.