



How to revise

A step-by-step guide on how to revise effectively for History

This guide details various approaches you can use to revise GCSE or A Level history content. Each method is described with a practical example.

The key to effective revision is:

- Begin your revision early
 - Develop a revision timetable to allocate enough time for studying history and other exams
 - Ask your teacher for a list of the topics for each exam paper. Then you can RAG rate that list - **red** for the areas you are not confident about, **amber** for those you know quite well and **green** for those areas you do definitely know.
 - Concentrate on improving your weaker areas first, but do revise the other areas too!
 - Use a variety of different revision techniques to improve your long-term memory
 - The final step should be to answer exam questions in timed conditions
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Interleaved and Spaced Revision

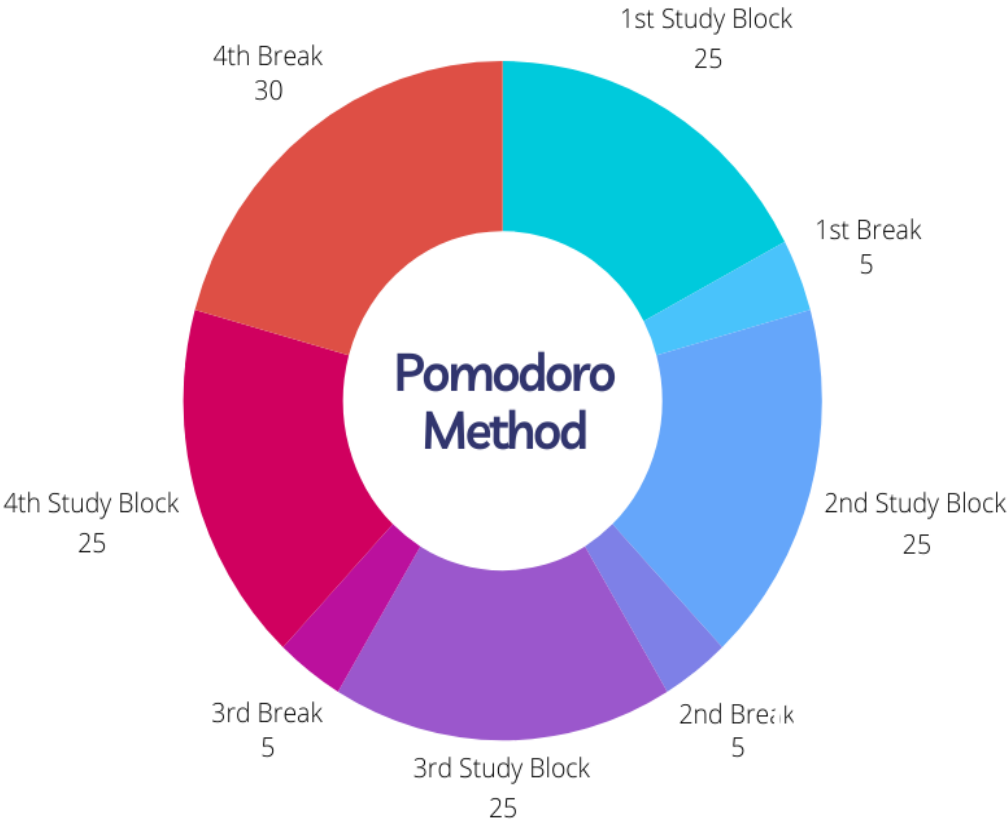
Interleaved revision is where you study one topic for a period of time, then switch to a different topic, and then switch again. For example, you could spend 15 to 30 minutes studying Paper 1 topic of Crime and Punishment (Edexcel), then switch to Paper 2 Cold War and then switch to Paper 3 Weimar and Nazi Germany. This switching between topics helps improve your memory of what you revise.



Spaced revision is where you break down the topics and revise them over a period of time - days, week and months. This means you have spaced out your revision. It is really important that you create a revision timetable so that you know when you are revising, what you are revising, and that you have left enough time to revise all the content.









Pomodoro Method

The Pomodoro Method is a technique in which you study in blocks of 25 minutes with a 5 minutes break. After completing 4 blocks of study, you take a longer break of 15 to 30 minutes.





This guide will help you create Cornell Notes and explain how to use them for revision.

<p>Step 1</p> 	<p>Use one side of A4 paper.</p>
<p>Step 2</p> 	<p>Draw a horizontal line at the top of the paper to create a space for the title question. The title question will be the main focus of your notes.</p>
<p>Step 3</p> 	<p>Create a column on the left-hand side of the page by drawing a vertical line about 4 cm from the edge of the paper. You will write your key questions in this margin.</p>
<p>Step 4</p> 	<p>Draw a horizontal line about 4 cm from the bottom edge to create the summary box. The summary will sum up the answer to the overall question at the top.</p>
<p>Step 5</p> 	<p>Read your exercise or text book on the topic your revision notes will cover.</p>
<p>Step 6</p> 	<p>If it is your own textbook or exercise book, you can highlight key information (e.g. dates, names, locations, statistics etc) with a highlighter as you read.</p>
<p>Step 7</p> 	<p>Write key questions in the left-hand column by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using the words of title of the pages in the textbooks• Using the words of the sub headings in the textbook• Working out what is the main focus of the paragraphs in the textbook
<p>Step 8</p> 	<p>Write notes on the right-hand side that answer the question. Use shorthand, images, colour and statistics.</p>

Step 9



Revise by covering up your Cornell notes with a new piece of paper, but leave the questions uncovered. Try to rewrite the notes from memory. Uncover your notes to compare what you have just re-written. Repeat the process on a regular basis.
So READ, COVER, WRITE and CHECK.

Example

GCSE History Weimar and Nazi Germany

Below is a text about what happened when Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany abdicated and Germany became a republic in 1918–1919.

There was massive unrest spreading across Germany. In late October 1918, sailors at Kiel Naval base refused to follow orders to set sail to attack the British Navy. Workers and Soldiers Councils based on those in communist Russia were set up in towns and cities. On 7 November a general strike was announced in Munich, the capital of Bavaria, and Bavaria was declared a communist state. The Kaiser's ministers told him on 9 November that the only way to restore order was for him to abdicate. At first, he refused. However, when the army refused to support him, Wilhelm finally abdicated. He then fled to the Netherlands on 10 November.

On 9 November, Philipp Scheidemann, a member of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), announced that Germany was a republic from a window of the Reichstag building because he feared a communist revolution. The Chancellor, Prince Max von Baden, handed his position to the leader of the SPD, Friedrich Ebert.

Chancellor Ebert immediately acted to ensure a peaceful transition of power from the monarch to a new democracy. On 10 November, he made a pact with General Groener; the army would support the new government to prevent a communist revolution. He suspended the Reichstag on the same day and created the Council of People's Representatives. This consisted of 6 moderate politicians to run the country until a new constitution could be drawn up. Ebert then had representatives sign the armistice with the Allies on 11 November to end the war.

In January 1919 there were elections to select a National Assembly. This assembly would be tasked with writing the new constitution of the new Republic. The National Assembly moved from Berlin to a small town called Weimar because Berlin was too dangerous. They finally agreed on a new constitution in July 1919 and the Weimar Republic was born.

Here is the example of a set of Cornell Notes created from the text.

How was the Weimar Republic created?	
Questions	Notes
Why did the Kaiser abdicate?	<p>10/18 - 🚢 Kiel Naval Base Naval revolt => spreads xross Ger.</p> <p>9/11/18 - ministers told Kaiser to abdicate. 1st he refused. Army would not support him => Kaiser abdicated.</p> <p>10/11 - Kaiser fled to Netherlands.</p>
How was the Republic declared?	<p>9/11 - Philipp Scheidemann, SPD, announced Republic to stop communist revolution.</p>
Who took power and what happened?	<p>9/11 - Friedrich Ebert of SPD = Chancellor</p> <p>10/11 - Groener-Ebert pact - army support new Republic against Communists.</p> <p>10/11 - Reichstag = closed. 6 moderate politicians = Council of People's Representatives. Run country until new constitution written.</p> <p>11/11/18 - Armistice signed 🇩🇪</p>
How was the new constitution written?	<p>Jan 1919 - elections for National Assembly - to design and write new constitution.</p> <p>Berlin = dangerous so moved to Weimar.</p> <p>New constitution = July 1919</p>
<p>Overall Summary - Kaiser abdicated on 9/11 and a republic was announced to prevent a communist revolution, power was transferred to moderate politicians (Council of People's Representatives) including Ebert of the SPD. Elections took place to select a National Assembly which wrote the new constitution.</p>	

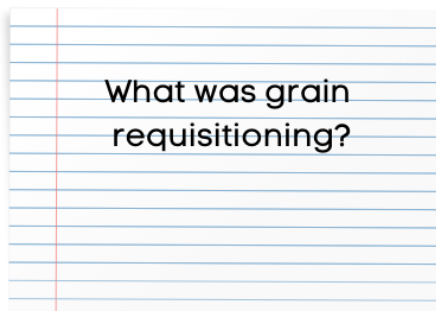


A flashcard is a piece of paper or card, A7 or A6 size (about 3x5 inches or 5 x 7 inches) on which you write a question on one side and the answer on the other side.

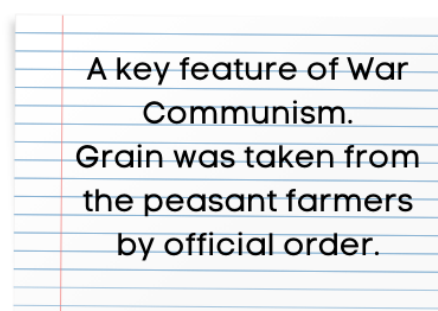
Flashcards can be created in different ways:

- A question on one side and the answer on the second.
- Keywords or terms on one side and the definition on the other.
- Colour coded e.g. the causes of events in red, the course of the events (what happened) in blue and the consequences in green.
- Different coloured flash cards for different topics. E.g. yellow flashcards for Weimar and Nazi Germany, green flashcards for the Cold War.
- Arguments for or against a particular point of view.

First Side



Second Side



Flashcards can be used in different ways:

- Quizzing on a regular basis to test your knowledge. There are Youtube videos that explain the most effective ways to use flashcards: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C20EvKtdJwQ>
- Creating a timeline of the key events of a topic. Separate all of the 'When did X happen?' flashcards from your pack. From memory, put the events into the correct chronological order. The questions will be face up. Then turn over the cards to check the dates to see if the events are in the correct date order.



Graphic Organisers

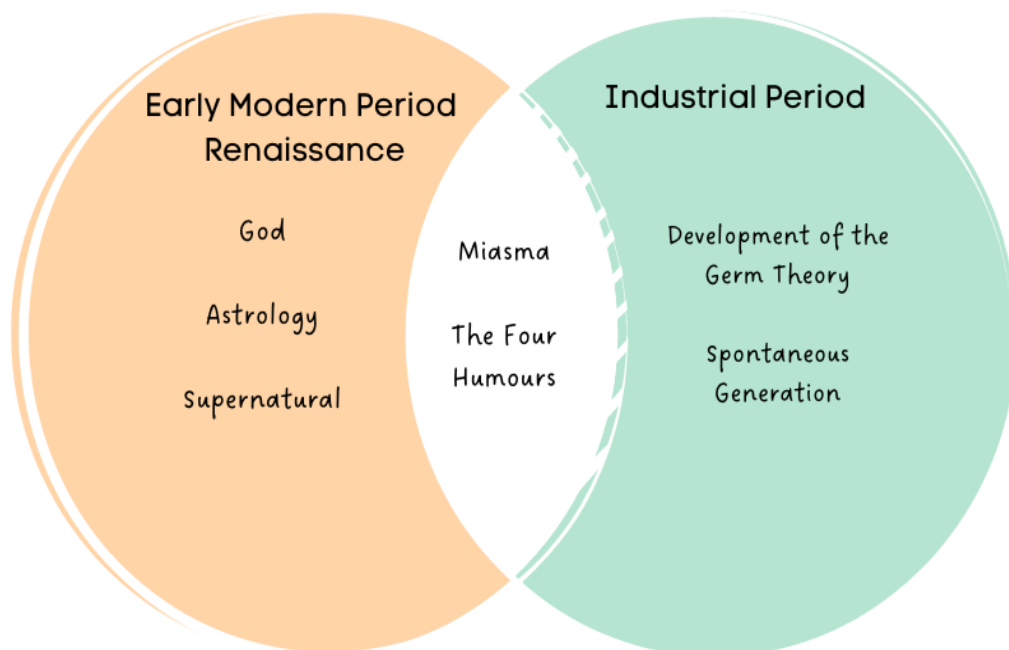
A graphic organiser is a way of changing your notes into a visual representation. You can use them to tell the story of one event, or create them as an overview of a whole topic.

There are different types of graphic organisers which can be used for different purposes:

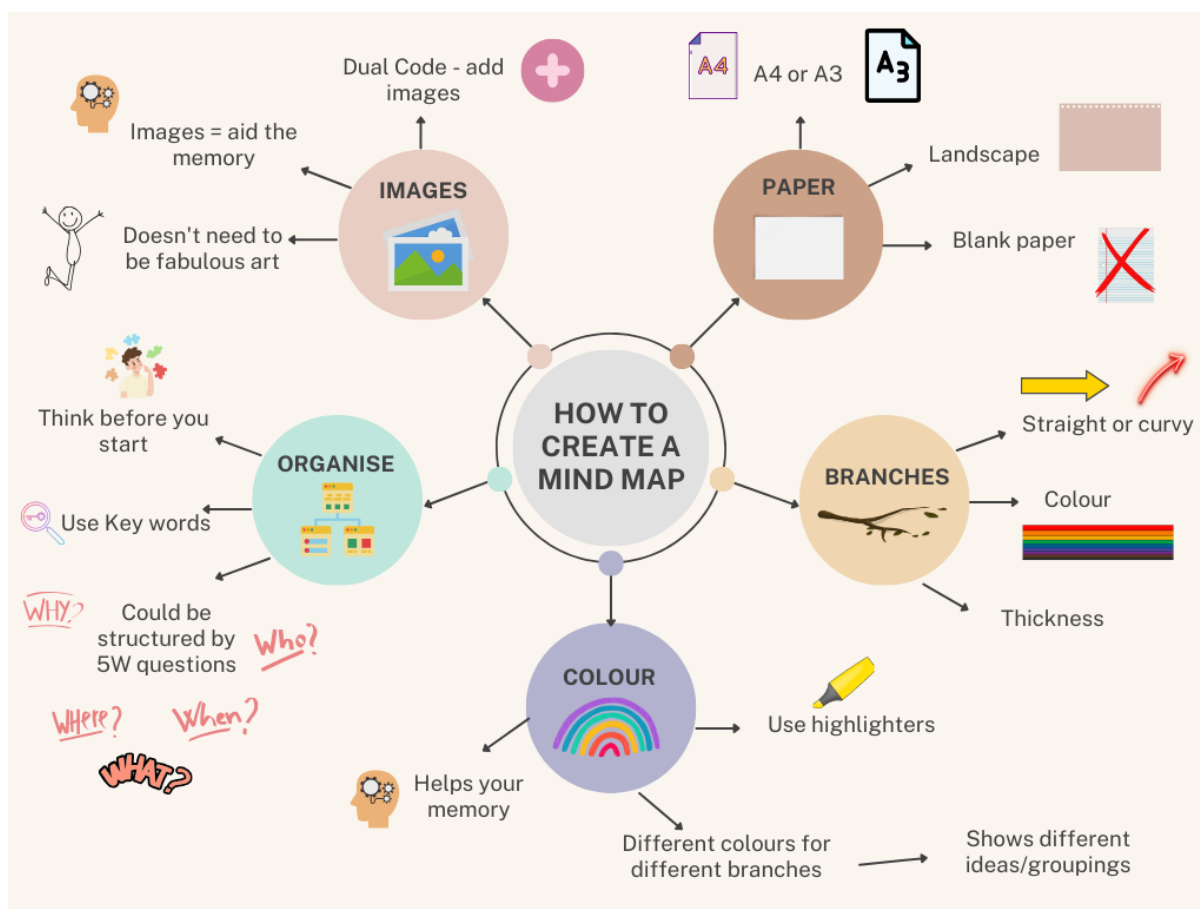
Venn Diagrams

Venn diagrams are very useful for showing similarity and differences or continuity and change.

Similarities and Differences
Beliefs about the cause of Illness - the Early Modern and Industrial Periods



Mind Maps



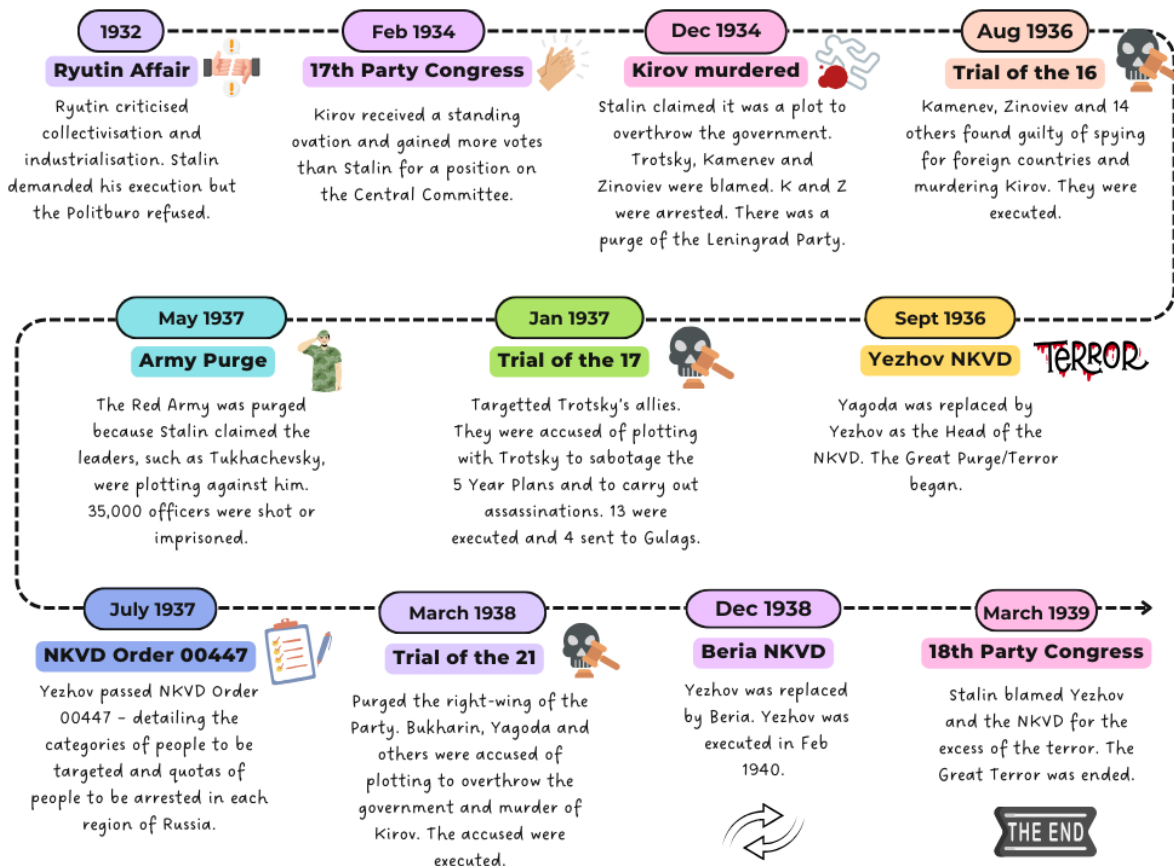
Mind maps could be used for one particular event e.g. the causes, events and consequences of the Munich Putsch 1923, or the social, economic, political impacts of WW1 on Germany or they could be used as a summary of a whole topic.

They are useful because you can show links between different concepts or events by drawing arrows between different parts of the mind-map.

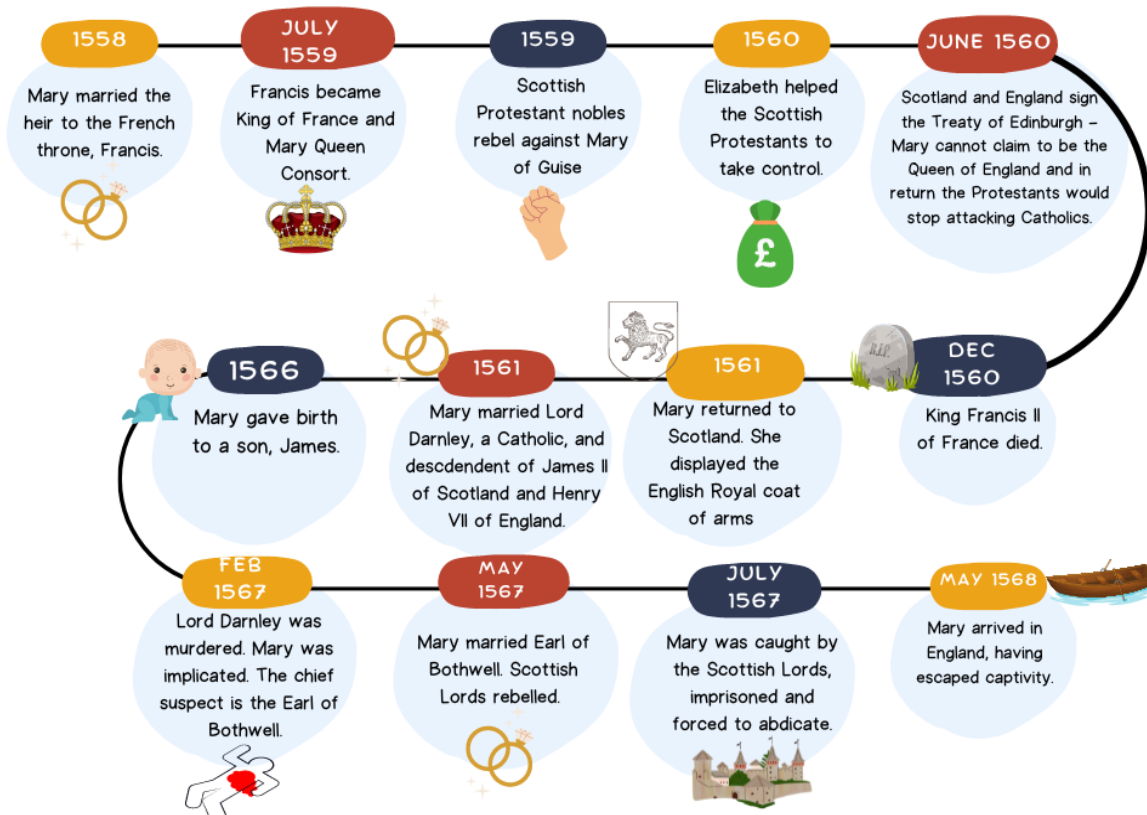
Timelines

Timelines are useful for revising the main events of a topic and learning the sequences of events.

They can be transformed by making them into a living graph e.g. creating a living graphs of the relationship between the USSR and the USA during the Cold War - you can plot how the level of tension changes over time.



THE LIFE OF MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS



Flow diagrams

Flow diagrams are useful for revising a sequence of events – for example the causes of an event. Bear in mind that events are often caused by many different factors happening at the same time, so often the story is not a straight line of one event leading to another!



1 RAP

- 200m from the front line (in communication trenches or buildings)
- Staffed by Regimental Medical Officer and some stretcher bearers
- Basic First Aid
- Either get injured back to the Front Line or send them onto ADS

2 DRESSING STATIONS

- **Advanced Dressing Stations** 400m from the RAP.
- **Main Dressing Stations** ~0.5 mile behind the Front Line.
- Located in places that would give shelter from shelling e.g. buildings, bunkers, tents etc.
- Staffed by 10 medical officers, RAMC stretcher bearers and medical orderlies.
- Maximum of 1 week stay

3 CASUALTY CLEARING STATIONS

- 7 miles behind Front Line
- In buildings & near railway lines for transportation to **Base Hospitals**
- Staffed by doctors, nurses and orderlies
- Increasingly operated on the most critically injured until 1918 (German Spring Offensive)
- Prevent infection
- Had operating theatres, X-ray machines
- Could deal with 1000 patients

4 BASE HOSPITAL

- Near the French or Belgian coast & ports.
- Patients would be sent to Britain for further treatment.
- Became more specialised over time with wards for head wounds, amputees, chest wounds etc.
- Up to 2,500 patients at one time.
- Increased in size to cope with major offensives.

Hierarchies

Hierarchy diagrams are very useful to show the structure of society e.g. Elizabethan society, Anglo-Saxon or the Norman feudal system. Each row could have a short description of that group and images to help you recall the information.



King

made laws & defended the country from attack

Major Nobles: Earls

Owned large areas called Earldoms. Only ~6 Earls, advisers to the King.

Minor Nobles: Thegns (Thanes)

>1%. Local lords - 4-5,000 Warriors who were granted land so they protected the King. Responsible for road, fortification and bridge repairs. Lived in manor houses.

Freemen: Ceorls (Curls)

~10% of the population. Owned small farms. Had to do some work for the local lords. Had to fight if called upon.



Peasants:

70%+ of the population. Worked for their Lord for up 3 days per week. Then worked on land they rented. If war occurred, men could be asked to fight for their Lord.



Slaves:

~10% of the population. Were viewed as the property of their Lord. Worked on their Lord's land or as a servant in their home. Their Lord controlled their lives - work, hours, and sometimes who they could marry.



Dual coding is using images with your notes. All of the methods of revision that have been explained in this guide have examples of dual coding, so have a look!



Mnemonics are a brilliant way to recall key facts by using a pattern of letters or words to help jog the memory.

For example, to remember the key terms of the Treaty of Versailles, I find the phrase 'Germany was treated like a BRAT' helps me to remember:

Blame (Article 231)

Reparations

Armed Forces

Territory



Retrieval Practice

Retrieval practice is a type of revision in which you test your knowledge of the content. It forces you to recall facts and details which helps the information stay in your long term memory.

There are many different ways you can quiz yourself:

Online tests:

- Seneca Learning: <https://senecalearning.com>
- BBC Bitesize: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/subjects/zj26n39>
- GCSE History: www.gcsehistory.com
- GCSEPod (a school subscription is required): www.gcsepod.com

Create your own Quizzes

- Online apps such as Quizlet, Memrise, and Brainscape allow you to create your own flashcards or revise using ones that have already been made by another person.
- Create a variety of different types of quizzes:
 - Question and answer (such as your flashcards)
 - True/false statements
 - Odd-one out
 - Multiple choice questions

How do you use quizzing?

- Firstly, create your revision materials (Cornell Notes, flashcards, graphic organisers - mind maps, Venn diagrams, flow charts, timelines, living graphs etc.)
- Secondly, revise using your revision materials:
 - Read, cover, write and check

- Explain the content to another person
 - Lastly, complete a quiz on the content you have revised. It is better to leave sometime between the actual learning and the testing of your memory (see the section on Interleaving and Spacing).
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The final step, is to complete exam questions to test how well you can recall the information to answer specific questions.

There are several different ways to use past exam questions:

- Download the exam reports from your exam board websites. They contain real answers that students wrote in the exams and the examiners comments about those answers.
 - Use these examples to see what makes a good answer (and in some cases a not so good answer!) Your teacher might also be able to share model answers with you.
 - Plan an answer to past question.
 - Answer an exam question in timed conditions.
 - Complete a whole paper in timed conditions.
 - Ask your teacher to mark your practice questions.
 - Try to mark your own answers using the mark schemes.
 - Work with a friend – answer the same question and then compare how you answered it.
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If you are struggling with your revision and need a helping hand, I can help!

I provide one-to-one online, tailor tuition:

- Revise the content
- Step-by-step guides on how to answer the exam questions for AQA, Edexcel (iGCSE and GCSE) as well as CIE History courses
- Walking, Talking Mocks (I walk you through the exam questions, talk you through a model answer and then you try a question).

You can also access my FREE resources if you follow me online:

- Instagram: @Lynn_History_Tutor
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/MyHistoryTutor
- TikTok: MyHistoryTutor

Free online resources:

- History Shorts episodes covering the Cold War and Weimar and Nazi Germany topics
- Top Tip Tuesday: top tips for revising and answering questions.

Contact me by email: MyHistoryTutorOfficial@gmail.com

