



Collingwood's Top Tips

Key advice, prepared by each
Department, to help you to succeed in
your GCSE examinations



WARNING: This booklet can only make a difference if you read
and follow the advice.

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Revising for Examinations

1. **Plan Ahead**

Think out what you need to do between now and the examinations. Work out a revision timetable. Ask your Tutor for help with this. Start early; do not try to cram 2 years of work into 2 weeks.

2. **Make notes**

Do not try to revise from 2 years worth of notes – make a summary of each section. Learn the key terms.

3. **Variety**

Tackle several subjects on each day. This will help to break up the time. Avoid working on one topic for a whole day. It is better to re-visit topics 2 or 3 times over a period of several days.

4. **Eating**

Start with breakfast – your brain needs fuel to function properly. Give yourself regular breaks and have snacks, for example a banana, to provide a source of energy.

5. **Breaks**

Each person is able to concentrate for different lengths of time. Try to take a few minutes break every 30 minutes to keep your mind fresh and to reflect on the things you have been revising.

6. **Diagrams**

Producing diagrams and large A3 sized charts for your notes can help. Pin them up in your room and on the fridge!!

7. **Past Papers**

Complete past papers and make time to do the same one twice. Then tackle the areas of weakness. It is too easy to revise something you already know.

8. **Teach your Parents**

Explaining a topic to a parent or friend is a very good way to learn. If you have to explain it and answer their questions you will improve your own understanding.

9. **Sleep**

It can be difficult to sleep before examinations but it will be a lot easier if you know you have prepared fully for the examination.

Examination Advice

1. Read the questions carefully.
2. Use a highlighter pen to identify the important parts of the question.
3. Look at the number of marks available for each section.
4. Plan your time carefully so that you can attempt all of the questions.
5. Annotate diagrams.
6. Try to ensure your answers are neatly presented.
7. Remember to use punctuation.
8. Ensure that you can spell key subject terms accurately.
9. Proof read your answers and make corrections.
10. Attempt all the questions. Do not leave blank spaces.



Top Ten Tips

Art & Photography

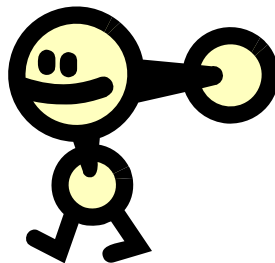
1. Complete all work to the best of your ability.
2. Ensure your coursework is always up to date.
3. Keep to deadlines.
4. Ensure that you complete all of the required independent preparatory work prior to the start of your practice and final exam.
5. Always attempt your homework and hand it in on time.
6. If you get behind with your work, speak to your teacher and agree a plan to get back on track – do not ignore the problem. It won't go away!
7. Visit galleries and exhibitions.
8. Collect images of things that inspire you such as paintings, photographs, pictures, sculptures and stick them in your sketch book.
9. Discuss with your teacher how you can personalise your work.
10. If things do not go to plan, learn from your mistakes.



Top Ten Tips

Biology

1. Learn key words and definitions.
2. “Tell a story”, eg Journey of protein molecules.
3. Mind maps / songs / poems / raps / flashcards, etc on walls / mirrors.
4. Bitesize revision → parents.
5. Summary tables / compare / contrast tables.
6. Annotated diagrams.
7. Use of highlighting / underlining.
8. Teach someone else, eg parents / younger brothers or sisters.
9. Make a tape, play it back, headphones.
10. Modelling – plasticine.



Top Ten Tips

BCS

1. Learn to touch-type – everything will be so much easier throughout the BCS course!
2. Never give up – if at first you don't succeed, try and try again. Practice does make perfect in BCS.
3. Discuss your BCS problems with your teacher and get extra help – especially in the last month leading up to the 'real' exams.
4. Use www.iw-chameleon.org.uk on a regular basis. It is an excellent site for revision.
5. If you are absent, ask your teacher for the work you have missed.
6. Attend the 06.30 revision session on the morning of your Theory Paper (the adrenaline will keep you going).
7. Study your ring file thoroughly before both examinations.
8. In both exams, try the questions you know first and go back to the others later on. Remember: A "guess" is better than a "gap" and an attempt could earn you marks.
9. If a question is worth 8 points in the Theory Examination, you must make 8 comments.
10. Tick off each instruction in the Practical Paper to ensure you have done everything the examiner wants. Proof read and re-print as often as necessary.



Top Tips for Business Studies

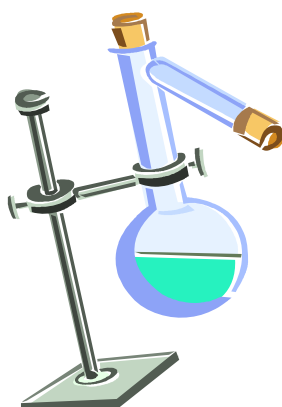
1. Use a reliable revision guide to begin your revision. Check over the work you have completed since Year 10 and download what you need from your user area and M Drive.
2. Plan a revision guide: This week – Marketing: Market Research. Next week – Marketing: Market Segmentation, etc. You should be doing this NOW!!!
3. Look at the definitions Mr Good has developed. Make sure anything that you are unsure of is highlighted and then check with your teacher.
4. Create a 1 page 'Revision Sheet' for each topic. Use spider diagrams, headings and lists to make it easier to remember. It's easier to revise from this instead of everything.
5. Test yourself regularly. Ask someone to test you often at home.
6. Mix up your revision methods. Use notes, revision guides, Bitesize and fill in the gaps by watching the News or programmes such as Dragon's Den.
7. Don't revise for more than 45 minutes at a time. Have a break for about 15 minutes. Ensure that the break is ONLY 15 minutes!
8. When given a Tutor4U Revision Pack – use it! There are lots of questions, key terms and essay practices.
9. Get to know the case study well before you enter Kingston Theatre.
10. In the exam itself timing is important. You should not spend any longer than 30 minutes on Section A (1 minute per mark). DON'T SPEND TOO MUCH TIME ON A QUESTION WORTH ONLY 2 OR 3 MARKS.
11. **Read the question carefully.** Identify the key terms in the question. If it says 'examine' – explain, 'analyse' – give advantages and disadvantages. If it says GIVE 2 REASONS – GIVE 2 REASONS.
12. Use any examples from the case study – or if you can't think of any – use real life business examples to explain your points.
13. At the end of the exam READ your answers. Make sure you haven't gone off on a tangent. Have you answered the question fully? Is there enough detail in your answer to get all the possible marks?
14. Get a good night's sleep, eat well and have a good breakfast before the exam. Make sure you drink lots of water – your brain doesn't work without water!



Top Ten Tips

Chemistry

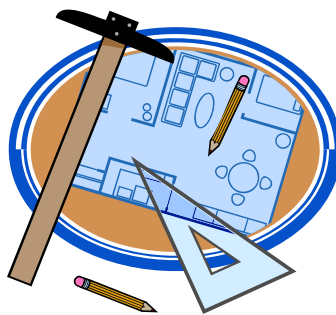
1. Make sure you have somewhere quiet to revise where you won't be disturbed.
2. Start revising in plenty of time, well ahead of exams.
3. Note down the dates of revision sessions and attend classes in topics you find difficult.
4. Draw up a realistic revision timetable and stick to it as closely as possible.
5. Arrange to see staff about topics you find difficult after revision.
6. Use the syllabus to check what you need to know.
7. Make sure you cover all the topics that you need and spend a similar time on each.
8. Make sure you revisit the same topic several times during the course of your revision.
9. Rather than just reading revision guides, try some of the following:
 - Read a section then cover it up and try to write down key points
 - Read a section then cover it up and try to answer past questions
 - Read a section then cover it up and use a website (eg Bitesize) to test knowledge
10. If you're going to do, say, 2 hours revision in an evening, 4 bursts of 30 minutes is more effective than one session of 2 hours.



Top Tips

Design and Technology

1. Ensure your response answers the design brief.
2. Use a range of relevant research sources.
3. Analyse your research.
4. Apply annotation throughout your work.
5. Use technical terminology (key words) in your written work.
6. Demonstrate a range of drawing techniques, both 2D and 3D.
7. Produce a detailed Plan of Make that includes processes, tools, time-needed and safety points.
8. Refer to your Specification when evaluating your product and always suggest improvements.
9. Present your work effectively.
10. Use the tools and techniques in the way that you have been shown.
11. Ask if you are unsure about anything.
12. Keep to interim deadline marking dates.
13. Have all equipment with you for each lesson.
14. Check outline plan for lesson content if you have been absent.
15. Put at least 3 specifications in your folio - design, product and manufacturing specifications.



Top Tips

Double Science

1. Learn key words and definitions.
2. Learn chemical symbols.
3. Learn physics formulas.
4. Make mind maps/revision cards.
5. Make summaries or notes.
6. Read revision out loud, talk it through with a friend or parent, and get them to ask or answer questions on a topic.
7. Get enough sleep.
8. Use highlighting to emphasise important words or phrases in your notes.
9. Teach a topic to someone else (parent/friend/brother/sister).

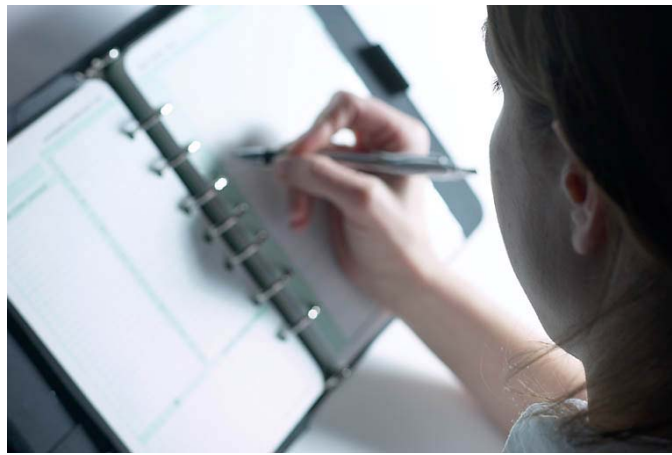


Top Tips

English

1. Write in complete sentences.
2. Ensure each sentence makes sense.
3. Begin each sentence with a capital letter and close with a full stop.
4. Remember that a paragraph is a collection of sentences on the same topic and theme.
5. Structure all extended and longer pieces of written work into paragraphs.
6. Leave a line between each paragraph.
7. Vary the beginning of sentences.
8. Vary sentence structure, writing in a range of sentence forms from long sentences to short simple ones.
9. Use a thesaurus to extend your vocabulary.
10. Read more broadly to extend your vocabulary, broaden your understanding of the written form and to use as models for your personal writing.
11. Experiment with different styles of writing.
12. Use more description and imagery.
13. Gain an understanding of punctuation and apply the rules of punctuation.
14. Remember that all punctuation in direct speech is within the speech marks.
15. Proof read all work to correct any spelling or punctuation errors.
16. Learn and apply the apostrophe rule.
17. Ask for help from your teacher and ask to be reminded of rules linked to writing, spelling and punctuation.
18. Be aware of the importance of the presentation of your work.
19. Do not rush or hurry the end of your work.
20. Be aware of the importance of tone and style.
21. Support points with reference to texts, case studies and through Point, Example, Explain.
22. Identify the key focus of a task.

23. In literature, comment specifically on the features, effects and impact of words and language.
24. Explore a topic thoroughly and in depth.
25. Comment on the impact and effects of language, genre and communication on audience.
26. Focus and pay attention to detail.



Top Ten Tips

Geography

1. An A* answer must include:
 - a) Key Terms
 - b) Case Studies
 - c) Clear description and explanation
2. Learn your **case studies** thoroughly and locate them accurately with maps if you can.
3. Write extended prose and not bullet points or lists.
4. Always fill the space provided. Never leave a blank space. Remember if you write something you might just get a mark.
5. When you describe you must **quote facts and figures** from the map or diagram.
6. Make sure you know the difference between '**describe**' and '**explain**'.
7. When answering **comparison** questions remember to use terms such as 'A is like this **whereas** B is like this' or 'A did this, **however**, B did this'.
8. Look at the **marks** for each question and use these as a **guide** to how much to write or how many points to make.
9. Remember **one mark is one minute of time**. There are thirty marks for each question. The exam is one and a half hours long so spend thirty minutes on each question.
10. At the end of the exam always **check your answers**, eg grid references, labels and titles.



Top Ten Tips

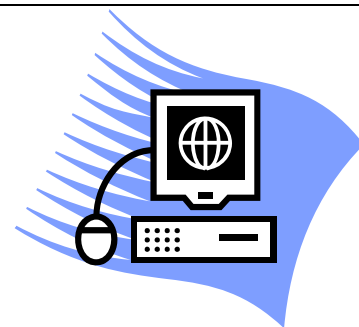
History

1. Remember – ‘content, provenance and a balanced answer!!’
2. Use past questions as part of your answer.
3. Catch up on ALL class work and homework missed. It is your responsibility if you have been absent.
4. Understand what is required for each of the GCSE levels and push yourself to achieve your potential.
5. Identify the different styles of questions and focus your answer accordingly.
6. Use the GCSE marks schemes given to you to familiarise yourself with what the examiner wants.
7. Use PEGEX to structure your paragraphs.
8. Buy and use revision guides.
9. Be aware of the topics in each of the papers and organise your resources accordingly.
10. Remember – ‘A timeline is an historian’s friend!’



Top Tips

ICT



1. Ensure that the coursework is completed to the best of your ability, as this accounts for **60%** of the overall grade.
2. Use the coursework planner to ensure that you do not fall behind. Lesson time and homework have been allocated to each section to ensure that the deadline will be met.
3. Make changes to your first draft as soon as it is returned, as you are then unlikely to forget what is required.
4. Use your YELLIS prediction as a benchmark to determine how many marks you need to achieve on each piece of coursework. This will make the coursework more manageable for your ability.

A* - 35+ A - 30 B - 24 C - 18

Set your sights on achieving at least one grade higher than your prediction.

5. Use the coursework help sheet – Key Requirements as a checklist to ensure that all aspects have been included.
6. Use the following revision websites and tools to prepare for your theory paper:

GCSE ICT Companion (accessed from the applications folder on the desktop)
www.thevickrage.worldonline.co.uk/theteacher/gcse/gcse.htm
www.didcotgirls.oxon.sch.uk/depts/it/gcse/notes/main/index.htm
<http://www.ictgcse.com/>
http://www.teach-ict.com/s_gcsehome.htm
7. Look at the mark allocation for each question and ensure that you cover an equivalent number of points in your answer.
8. The essay type questions generally ask for two sides of an argument. Therefore you should split your answer into for/against, pros/cons, advantages/disadvantages with short bulleted answers. Write as many as you can not just enough to cover the mark allocation.
9. Ensure that you are able to draw a complete diagram of a network including network resources, local devices, wireless technology and Internet access.
10. Complete as many past papers as you can and work through the mark schemes, as these will inform you of the responses that the exam board are expecting.
11. Revise the key subject specific terminology and use these in your exam answers.
12. Use the GCSE ICT Grade Predictor to determine what you are likely to achieve/what needs to be achieved in order to gain the required grade.

Top Ten Tips

Maths

1. Use revision guides, discs and internet programmes
2. List topics as:

Red	→	Do not understand
Amber	→	I must revisit the topic
Green	→	Understand
3. Make revision cards using summary at end of each chapter and attempt mixed questions.
4. Contact teachers for help using email address or in person.
5. Small bites rather than big chunks of revision.
6. Don't just look at the work, DO questions.
7. Make sure you complete the 19 week revision sheets and revisit after you have revised.
8. Attend the revision classes after school.
9. Underline key words in the question.
10. Read questions thoroughly before starting and make sure your solution answers the question.



Top Tips

Modern Foreign Languages



Writing

1. Try to write in full, detailed sentences, varying the structure you use.
2. Be sure to use 'linking words' to make the sentences more varied and interesting eg make an extra clause by using conjunctions in the TL like 'although', 'when' and 'as'.
3. Add adjectives and make sure they have the right endings.
4. Expand your ideas and give opinions. Justify opinions, using words like 'because' in the target language.
5. Make sure your time sequences are clear. Check that you have been consistent in your use of the past, present or future tense.
6. Check your work through for accuracy, checking particularly that your verb endings, genders of nouns and spellings are correct.

Speaking, Listening and Reading

1. Ask your teacher for a tape with the GCSE conversation questions and specimen answers recorded. Play the tape whenever you have 20 minutes to spare. (Lots of short sessions are better than one long one).
2. Record yourself saying the answers.
3. Try to learn at least 5 new words a day. (If you do this just before going to sleep at night, you find that you wake up knowing them in the morning.)
4. Revise and learn basic vocabulary.
5. Be sure to learn very thoroughly food vocabulary (types of meat, vegetables, dairy produce and fruit), vocabulary connected with sport/leisure pursuits/hobbies and weather.
6. Make a list of the high frequency words and 'false friends' to make sure you aren't caught out in the listening and reading exams.

Use the Internet

1. Look at atantot.com, [language-online](http://language-online.com) etc.
2. Look at German and French websites and see what you understand (yahoo.de, yahoo.fr)
3. www.bbc.co.uk/languages
4. Past French GCSE papers: <http://www.frenchrevision.co.uk>

5. French and German practice exercises in Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/french>
6. French Reading Exercises: <http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/haberg/newspage3.htm>
7. French Reading Papers: <http://www.wildfrench.co.uk/GCSEpapers/paperslist.htm>
8. French and German Revision Exercises: <http://www.s-cool.co.uk/default.asp>
9. Listen to German radio stations via the internet: www.antenne.com click live: www.ffn.de 'webradion. <http://www.surfmusik.de/land/deutschland.html>
10. For links to French radio stations go to: www.surfmusik.de/land/frankreich.html

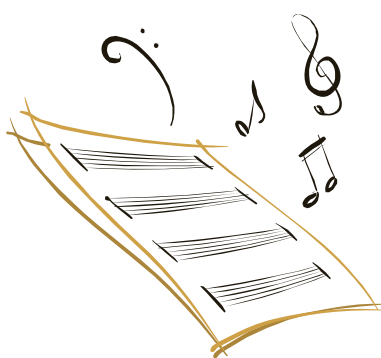
1.



Top Ten Tips

Music

1. Decide early in year eleven which solo and ensemble pieces you would like to submit for your final performances. This will allow you prepare an excellent performance and gain good marks.
2. All students should spend at least 1 hour per week working on their compositions in addition to any other music homework set.
3. Students should always be prepared to 'select and reject' compositional ideas and take advice given by your teachers.
4. Start revising for the listening examination early in year eleven. You will have covered some of the areas of study by this time.
5. Ensure you keep attending your lessons on instrument or voice throughout year eleven.
6. Attend all revision sessions organised by the music department in the final term before the examination.
7. Add dynamics and tempo markings to all compositions.
8. Students should study the marking criteria for both composing and performing.
9. All students must, as a matter of course, widen their listening experience to include music from the Baroque, Classical, Romantic and 20th Century eras.
10. Get involved in as many extra-curricular musical activities as you can - this will help develop your listening and performing skills.



Top Tips

Physical Education

1. When revising bones, muscles and joints, point to them on your body as you say the word or joint action. Link knowledge of muscles and muscle action with health, exercise, fitness and performance.
2. Apply your knowledge when watching sport on television. Commentators and analysis can raise points about a player's fitness or skills – you could explain to others watching with you what the commentators mean.
3. Read through your personal exercise programme the night before, this will refresh your memory on many points, especially the application of knowledge.
4. Go through your GCSE specification and use topic checklists to revise/test and monitor progress.
5. Watch the BBC's Bitesize Revision programmes.
6. Highlight aspects of the criteria that you are not sure about and ask for help.
7. Use contents page to cross reference objectives and aims taught in lessons.
8. Make a key points list; learn key definitions and basic diagrams (with labels). You may find it easier to remember these factors in a logical sequence. Know the definitions of each term and how they relate to each other.
9. Go over your trial exam paper and look at your strengths and weaknesses. How do they fit into the content sections of the specification?
10. Check the mark scheme for your trial exam to understand what the examiner wants in an answer. The mark allowance is a guide to the detail needed.
11. Get used to the style of questions used in the examinations by practising past questions and referring to the marks scheme. Do past papers twice, use exemplar material.
12. Understand and learn the five factors of health related exercise.
13. See the importance of these health related factors in your daily life and in terms of fitness and performance in sport.
14. It is important to know specific activities that can improve each of these areas of fitness.
15. Define the six skill related factors (ABCPRS), know what these terms mean and be able to apply this knowledge in exam questions.
16. Know the eight principles of training and how to use them in planning your PEP.

17. Be able to link methods of training with the principles of training. Know how to apply this knowledge of training methods to different sports and understand which methods are relevant to each sport.
18. Understand the need to exercise using a warm-up – main activity – cool down and the reason behind this sequence.
19. List the seven factors in a balanced diet. Describe the different body types. Know how diet and sport are related.
20. Be able to describe the dangers of using performance – enhancing drugs.
21. Understand the reasons for rules in sport and why it is important to abide by them for the safety of all players. Be aware of the ways in which competition should be balanced.
22. Recognise the signs and symptoms of sports injuries, the meaning and application of treatments DRABC and RICE.
23. Know how the circulatory system relates to exercise, fitness, training and performance. Be able to identify the parts of the circulatory system.
24. Be able to identify the parts of the respiratory system and the breathing mechanism.
25. Know how the range of movement improves with exercise and training and how this improves performance, reduces risk of injury and how flexibility at joints diminishes with age.
26. Try these websites:
www.s-cool.co.uk
www.teachpe.com/gcse_pe_exam_revision_questions_answers
www.bbe.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/pe
www.geocities.com/sjb_physed/GCSEPE.html
www.bbc.co.uk/sport/ (Choose practical activity)



Top Ten Tips

RS

1. Read the question carefully. Then pause, then think, THEN answer.
2. Quality matters. Lots of irrelevant writing will receive no credit.
3. Make sure you learn how to spell the technical words of the subject, eg believe, crucifixion, resurrection. It is even more infuriating for an examiner when you misspell words that are included in the examination question.
4. Spot the key instruction. Is it asking you to describe or explain? Is it a what question or a why question?
5. Use scripture properly to back up your answer, when suitable, ie put the quote in inverted commas and explain it. Why have you included it?
6. Always back up your opinions with reasons and evidence.
7. Care and presentation matter – if you cannot read your writing – then neither can the examiner.
8. Always spell God with a capital 'G'.
9. Look at the marks allocated. Have you done enough to get full marks?
10. Avoid vague/woolly answers. Be specific. Don't spend a whole page to make one point.



Top Ten Tips

Sociology

1. Learn and use Sociological terminology – by this we mean the words you have learned such as ‘domestic division of labour’, ‘alienation’, etc.
2. Prepare a list of words for each of the topics you have studied which you can use in your essays.
3. Practice writing essay plans with arguments for and arguments against, clearly written in a table.
4. Memorise information in this format:
 - *Learn a fact*
 - *Use a sociological word to describe it*
 - *Criticise it (strength or weakness)*

You can use this in your essays to get marks!

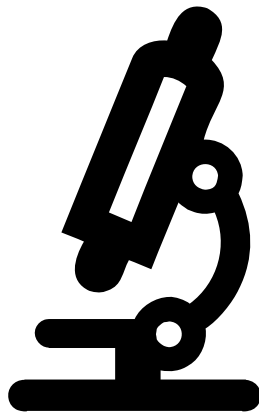
5. Practice giving an example for every point you make/learn.
6. Use spider diagrams to brainstorm as many facts as you can remember about a topic THEN look at your notes to see what you missed.
7. Use http://www.aqa.org.uk/qual/gcse/soc_assess.html to access past papers on the internet and practice the questions.
8. Work out from the marks available how much detail questions are asking you for, eg a 3 mark question will require an answer, some relevant Sociology and an example – 3 marks!
9. A good revision site on the internet is:
<http://www.hewett.norfolk.sch.uk/CURRIC/soc/y11/y11.htm> which has revision questions and worksheets for many of the topics we studied.
10. Make sure you don't start giving YOUR opinion in the exam, based on something you have seen on TV! ‘You must always keep thinking, what is the Sociology they are asking for?’ Practice this in your revision, ask your parents to ask you a question, eg ‘Why has the divorce rate risen?’ and tell them SOCIOLOGICALLY!



Top Ten Tips

Triple Science - Biology

1. Learn key words and definitions.
2. Tell a story, eg 'Journey of Walter the water molecule in Kidney County'.
3. Mind maps / songs / poems / raps / flashcards, etc. on walls/mirrors.
4. Bitesize revision → parents.
5. Summary tables / compare / contrast tables / graph plots.
6. Diagrams with labels and explanations.
7. Use of highlighting / underlining and colours.
8. Teach someone else, eg parents / younger brothers or sisters.
9. Read exam questions and follow instructions. Underline key instruction words.
10. Modelling – plasticine.



Top Ten Tips

Triple Science - Physics

1. Write formulae on cards/post-it notes and stick in prominent places, eg fridge door, mirror, next to photograph of boyfriend/girlfriend and learn them.
2. Look for examples of 'Physics' around you every day.
3. Look at graphs in text books and try to visualise/understand what they are telling you.
4. Practice calculations, showing working out. Look at worked examples in text books for guidance on how to set out answers to problems.
5. Prepare revision cards and mind maps for each topic.
6. Learn key words, definitions, meanings.
7. Learn which units match each quantity.
8. When doing past papers questions, think about the answers you have given; are they reasonable? If not, try to find your mistake.
9. Have a method to answering questions:
 - Read question carefully
 - Think about what it is asking you to do
 - What information is given
 - What do you know that will help
 - Now answer the question
10. Make sure your revision is ACTIVE. Do not just read the text book, but make notes, talk it through, read out loud, ask someone to ask you questions or answer questions from you.

