



ST DAVID'S

RC HIGH SCHOOL

Effective Studying

Being Organised

Revision Techniques

The Role of Parents/Carers

Exam Preparation

Personal Wellbeing

Subject Revision Guides

Why Revise?

Revision should be a long-term, ongoing learning strategy reinforcing school work

Memorising summarised notes + repeated practice recalling key information

Improved understanding of key components

Improved exam technique

Improved confidence + wellbeing

Effective Studying

- The Role of Parents
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Being Organised
- Revision Techniques
- Exam Preparation
- Personal Wellbeing
- Subject Specific Guidance

Maximise your time in school

Your teachers will be providing work to prepare you for your exams. Do this to the best of your ability and keep focused... even in lessons you do not enjoy!

Ask for help in areas you do not understand. Your class teacher will help! **You** are working for **you** now – take advantage of their knowledge, revision and exam expertise!

Do not hide away from issues – speak to your Guidance Teacher if there is anything that is stopping you from doing your best.

Get organised: Failing to prepare is preparing to fail

Be Organised

1. Exam Timetable

Know when your exams are - make a calendar with your subjects on it. Include all details including time, which paper it is, etc.

2. Study Planning

Create a timetable that fits in with your schedule. Make this your routine. Share this timetable with your parents and display it in your room and study space to keep you organised. You should have a different study timetable for school weeks and holidays.

Have a look at Study Planners from [SQA](#) and [YoungScot](#)... or make your own.

Have adequate time for every subject. Prioritise areas which you are less confident in, but continue to practice all areas of each course. Include all Study Support classes in your timetable.

Block study sessions into 45 minute chunks with short breaks in between

Be Organised

3. Stick to your Study Plan

Do not procrastinate – Stick to your start and finish times. Getting started is the hardest part – just do it.

Sit down before your revision is set to start. Get all your materials ready for the upcoming session. Take a couple of minutes to clear your head and then start on time.

4. Study Space

This space should work for you. Different people prefer working in different areas. Make sure it is quiet with no distractions and that you use the same space every time.

Organised with all equipment that you require close to hand – Pens, pencils, calculators, etc. And don't forget your notes, Past Papers, Flashcards, etc

Keep it tidy – take two minutes at the end of every session to tidy your equipment and file away your work

Family agreement – have rules in place to help maintain positive working environment. If you have siblings or pets – keep them away from this space

Revision Techniques

Work in short chunks of time with regular breaks. Give yourself time for hobbies and relaxation. You want to be focused and motivated when revising.

Have clearly defined times for a variety of revision techniques including practicing exam questions, marking answers, condensing notes and using memory aids such as flashcards.

If you are struggling and wasting time with a task, move on and come back to it.

However... do not skip parts you don't like or find difficult.

Note Taking

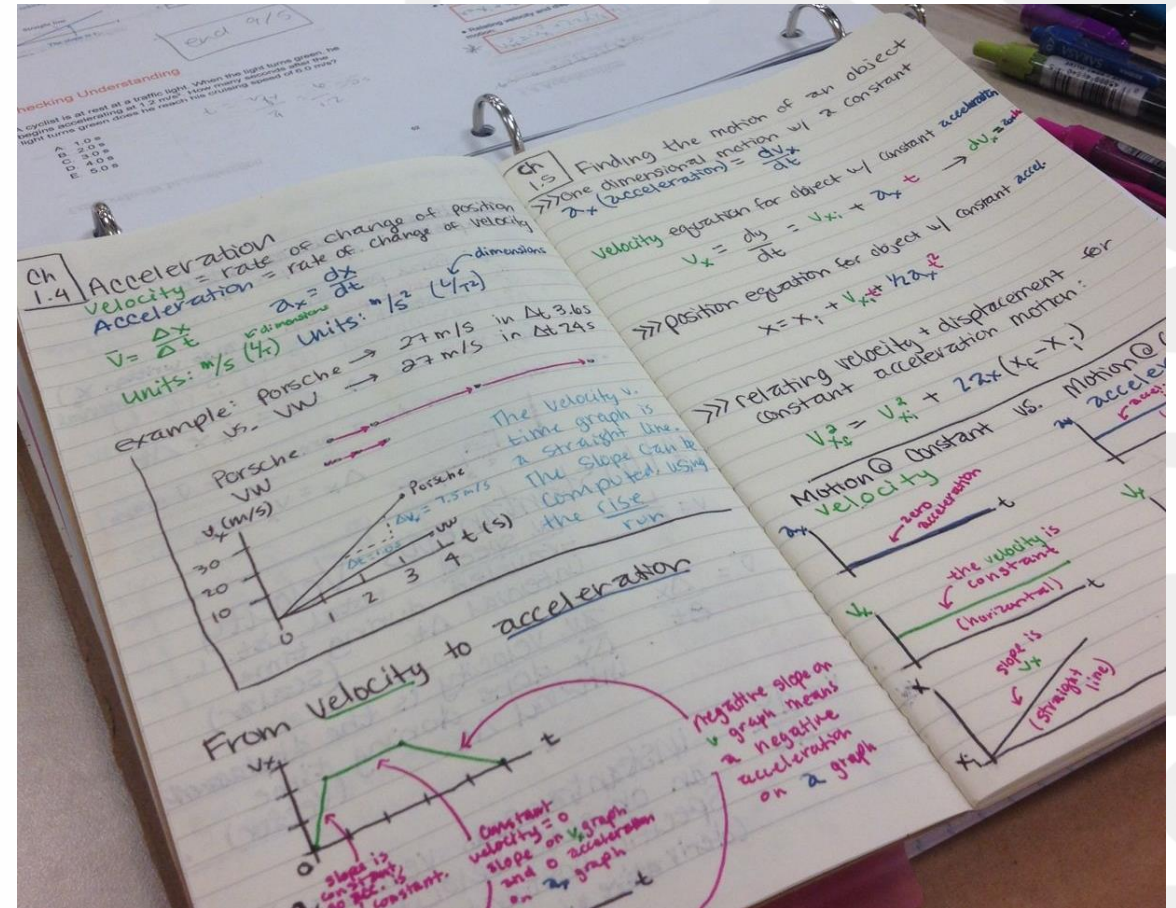
Bullet points and abbreviations will help to minimise reading and writing time

A different colour of pen for each topic will help you visualise content

Drawing boxes around key words will help them stand out

Underlining or highlighting key words will deepen your understanding

Using colour in notes has been proven to help you retain 50-80% more information.



Note Taking

Read

- Read the text
- Look for key words
- Look for headings, bold, etc

Cover

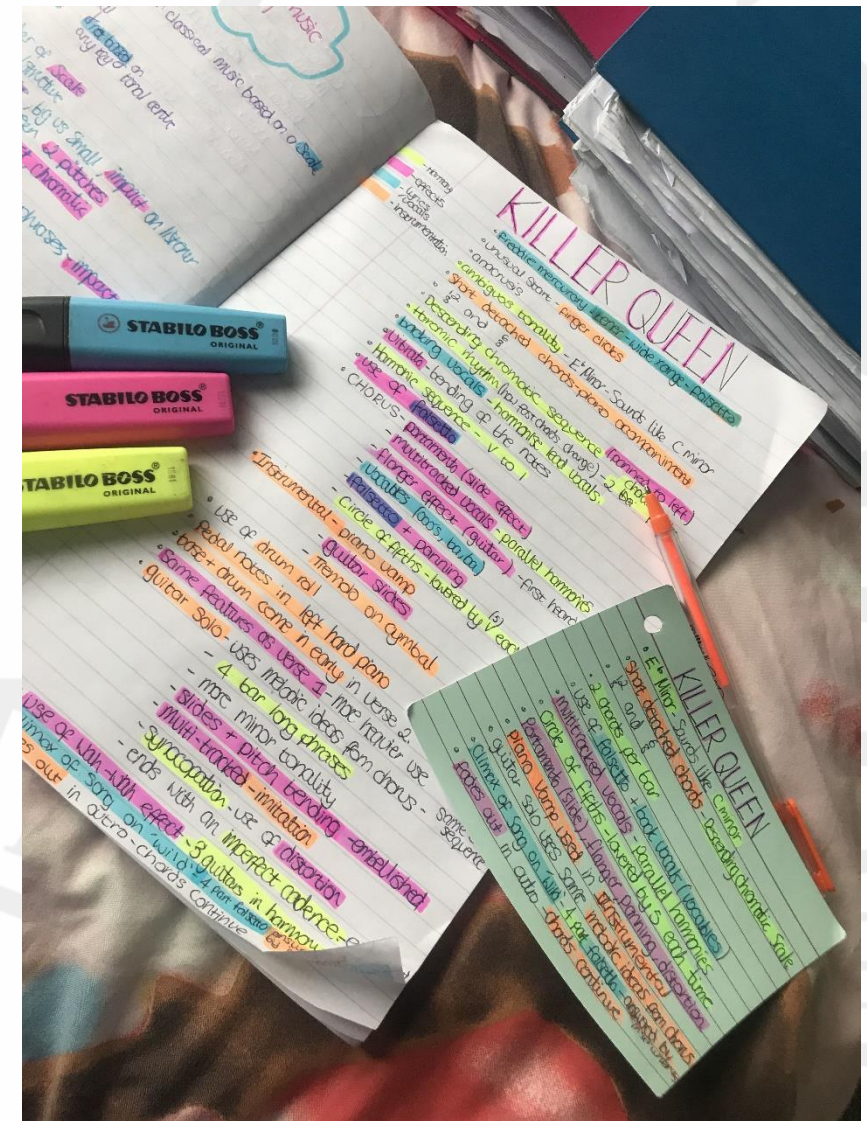
- Cover the text by closing the book/hiding notes/minimising browser

Recall

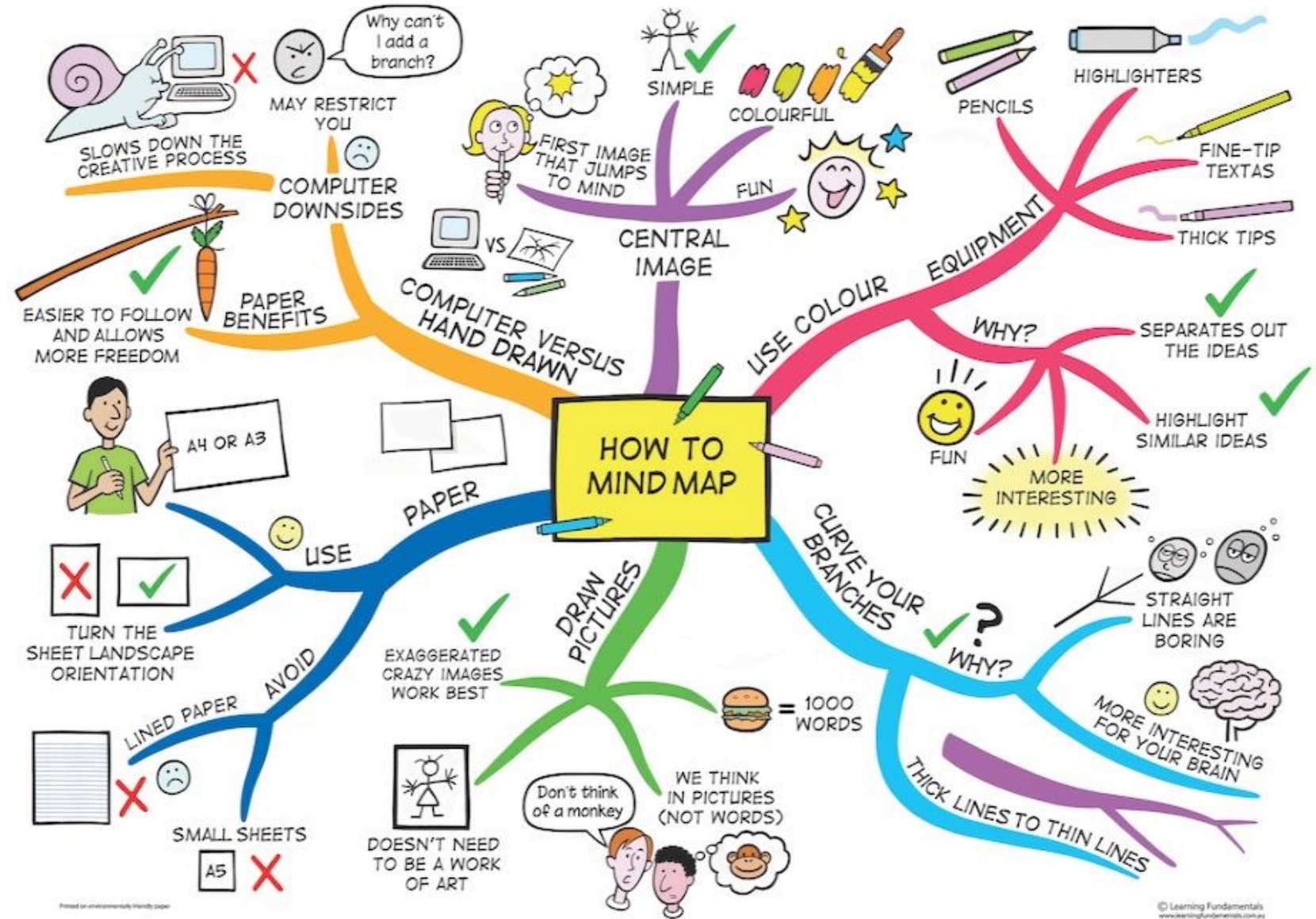
- What can you remember?
- Try to order your thoughts
- What are the key points?

Write

- Take notes on the key points
- Have you missed anything?
- Review and edit if necessary
- Once you finish a section, turn it over and try and recall as much as possible



Mind Maps



Past Papers

Completing past papers should be a key part of your exam preparations. With most subjects, you will not have covered all course content – so speak to your class teacher about which questions are suitable to try first.

As you move nearer to your exams, try and complete full or chunks of past papers. This will help you become more efficient at processing information and time management.

If you are giving your completed practice paper to your teacher, give them the marking scheme too. Make clear and definite arrangements to get feedback to discuss areas that need further revision.

Use the marking instructions to mark your work. This will let you see where marks are given, and how to structure your answers to access as many marks as possible.

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/pastpapers/findpastpaper.htm>

Flash Cards

Have a question or topic on the front and key information, such as themes, headings, answers or definitions, on the back.

Read the front, attempt your answer verbally/written and then check the back. Get family/friends to quiz you.

Osmosis

Movement of water molecules from a region of high water concentration to a region of low water concentration through a selectively permeable membrane.

What may happen to red blood cells placed in distilled (pure) water?

They will burst.

What will happen when plant cells are placed in distilled (pure) water?

They will become turgid. They do not burst as the cell wall (cellulose) gives them a rigid structure.

Other Revision Techniques

Revision Aids – Have key information around your study room to help you memorise it

Revision Videos – Take key points down in note form

Tests/Quizzes – Bitesize, Kahoot, or homemade tests

Teach someone else – This will allow you to organise key points

Acronyms – E.g. **SMART** Targets

Specific / Measurable / Achievable / Realistic / Time-bound

Mnemonics – Can you make up a phrase to help you remember a key concept?

Richard of York gave battle in vain

Red Orange Yellow Green Blue Indigo Violet

Exam Preparation

Prelims

Prelims help you to discover the weaknesses in your subject knowledge, how effective your study skills are and identify your strengths and weaknesses under exam pressure.

Speak to your teacher about areas in your prelim that were strengths and areas that require more work.

Review your own study approach to your prelims: Did you do enough? Did you revise the correct areas? Did you use the right techniques? Make changes **now** for your final exam preparations.

Command Words

The command word will have a big impact on how you structure your answer and what information you include in your answer. Practice your approach for each command word and use SQA marking instruction to see what you should include in your answers.

Command Words

These instruct the candidate on how to answer the question.

Understanding what is required in answering questions with different command words will be crucial to gaining marks.

Each subject will use different command words and different strategies for answering these questions. Practice these.

Calculate	Work out mathematically.
Compare	Are the things alike or are there differences? Which do you think is best? Why?
Contrast	Look for differences.
Define	Give the meaning.
Describe	Write in detail.
Discuss	Write about the important aspects of the topic. Are there two sides to the question? Consider the arguments for and against.
Evaluate	Judge the importance or success.
Explain	Make clear.
Illustrate	Give examples which make the point clear.
Interpret	Explain the meaning in your own words. For example, you may be asked to interpret a graph.
Justify	Give reasons to support an argument or action.
State	Write briefly the main point.
Summarise	Bring together the main points.

Last Minute Revision

Yes – it is worth it. By the day before the exam, your revision notes should be short enough to read through in one session. The final read-through will help key words and concepts to stick in your mind.

On the morning of the exam, refresh key quotes, formulae, etc that are likely to be in the exam – you can write these down as soon as your exam starts to allow you to concentrate fully on the paper.

Even if your last minute revision helps you get 1 extra mark in the exam – that could be the difference between not achieving your goal and achieving your goal.

The night before...

Get organised: Sort out everything you need so as to avoid a rush in the morning.

SCN Card

Pens and pencils

Eraser

Highlighters

Calculator

Dictionary

Sharpener

Spare pens and pencils

Water bottle

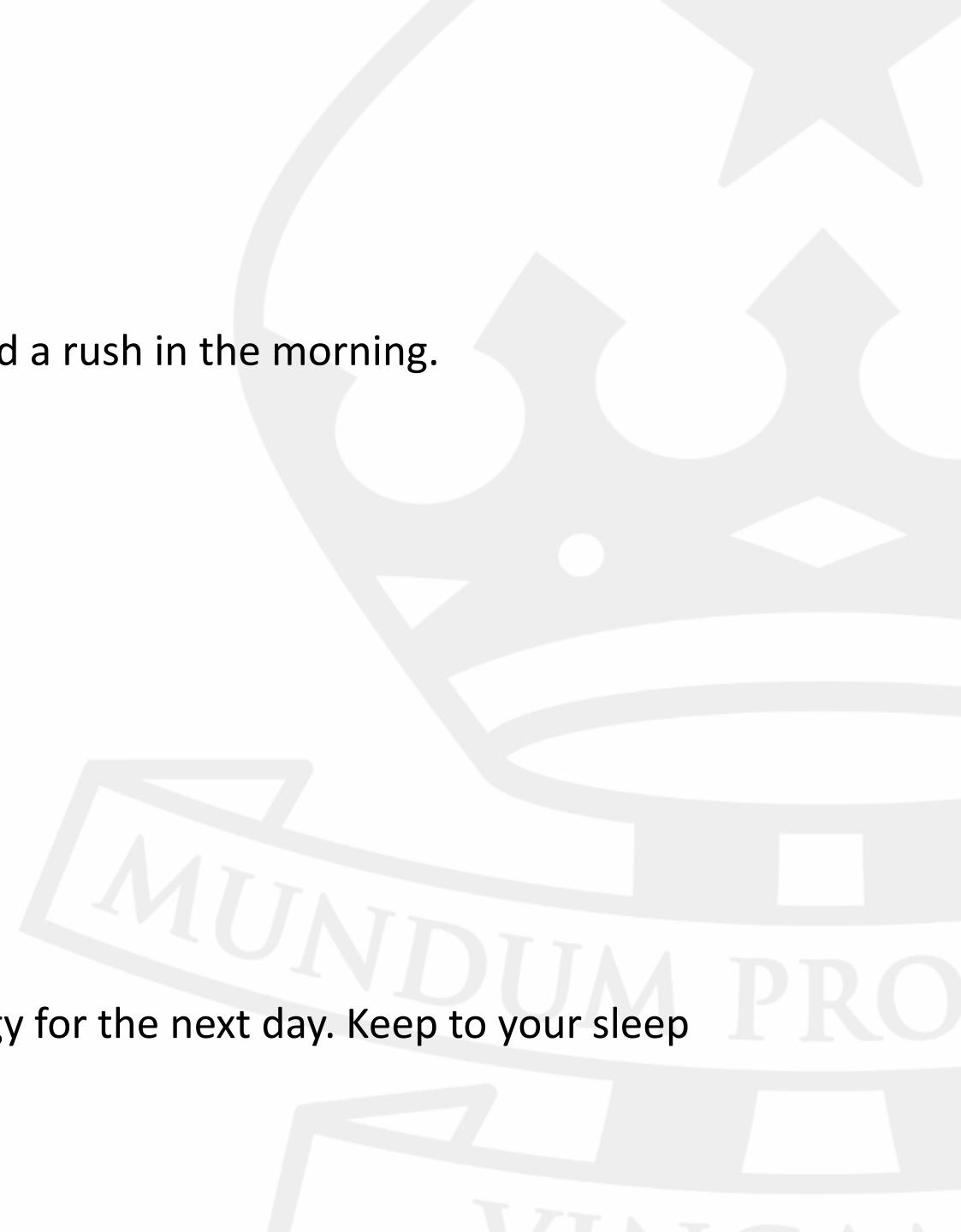
Ruler

Protractor and compass

Watch

Complete your last minute revision

Sleep – Don't stay up cramming! You will need your energy for the next day. Keep to your sleep pattern for your full exam timetable.



The day of the exam...

Set an alarm and get up early

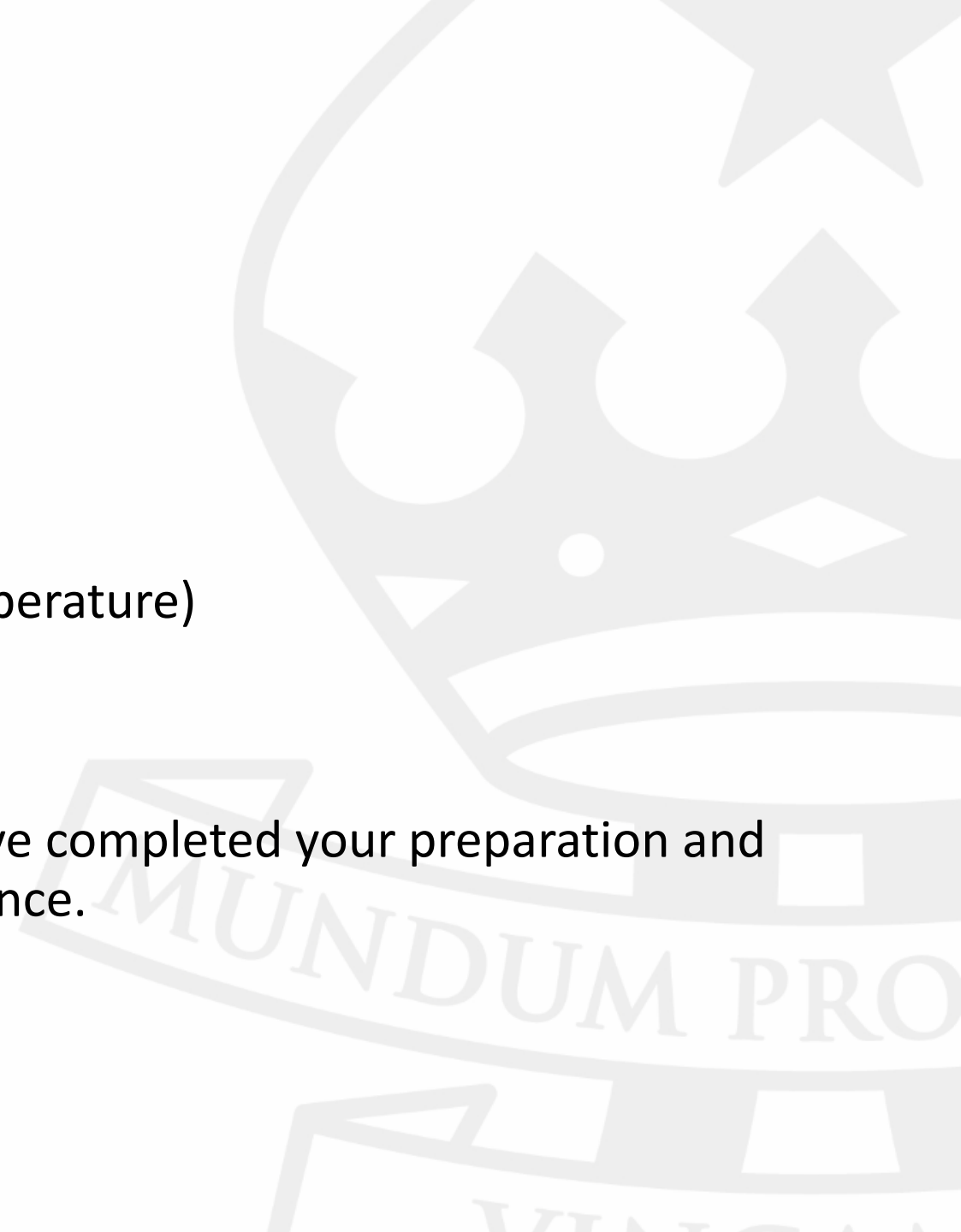
Eat a healthy breakfast (+ lunch)

School uniform (sensible as hall can vary in temperature)

Get to school early

Ignore other people's fears and worries. You have completed your preparation and you need to concentrate on your own performance.

Breathe.



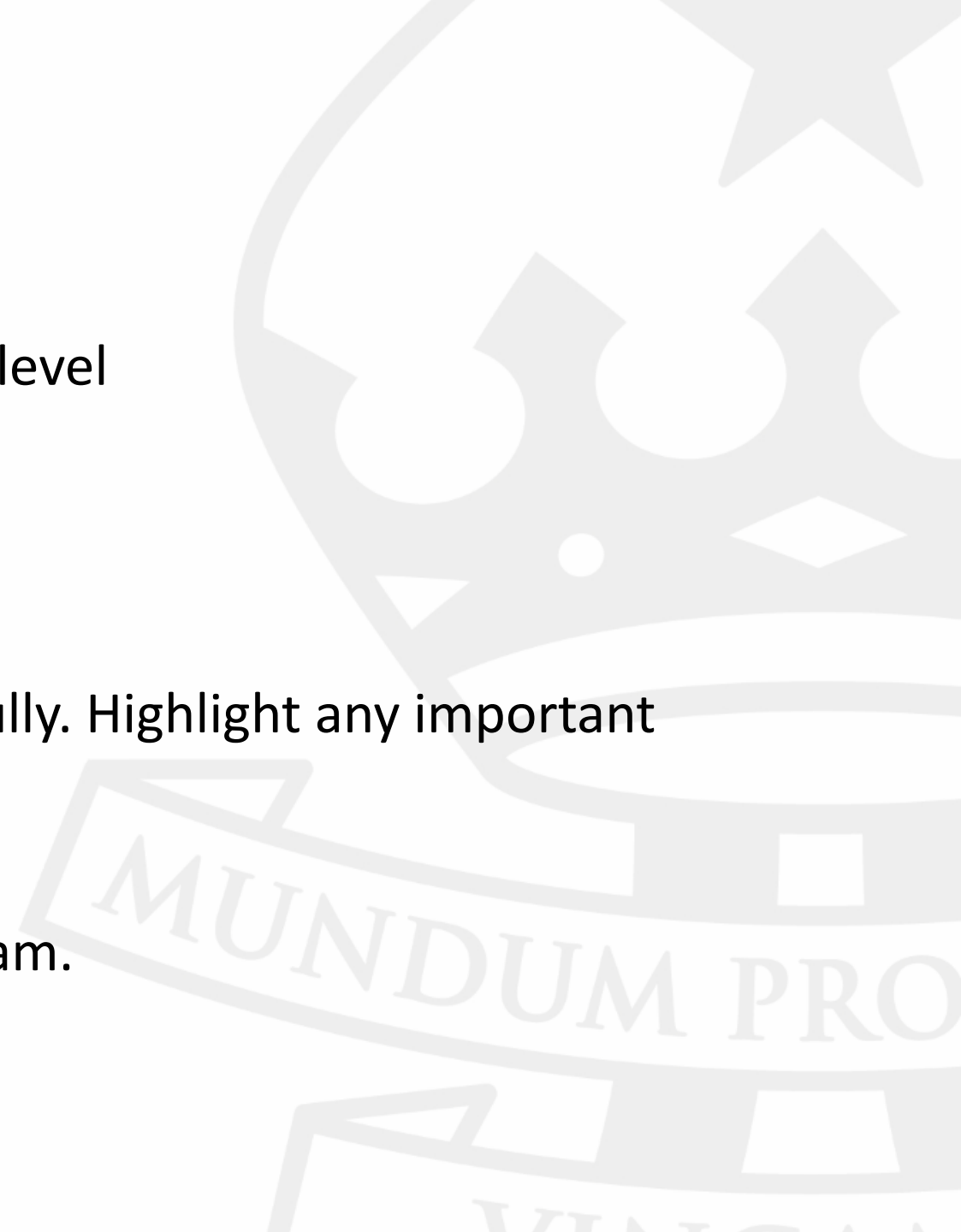
When you sit down...

Check the paper for the correct subject and level

Fill in all personal details

When instructed, read all instructions carefully. Highlight any important instructions.

Note the start time and end time of your exam.



First 5 minutes of the exam...

Read through all questions

If there is a choice of questions, circle the ones you intend to do.

Or

Circle the questions you are confident in your approach to answering and do them first.

Decide how long you have for each question/section – particularly longer questions.

During the exam...

Highlight key words in the questions to focus your attention on what you are being asked.

Plan your answers.

Re-read difficult questions or come back to them later.

If you get stuck, go on to the next question and come back to the unfinished one at the end.

Stay until the end of the exam and check your answers.

If you are running out of time - bullet point your answers

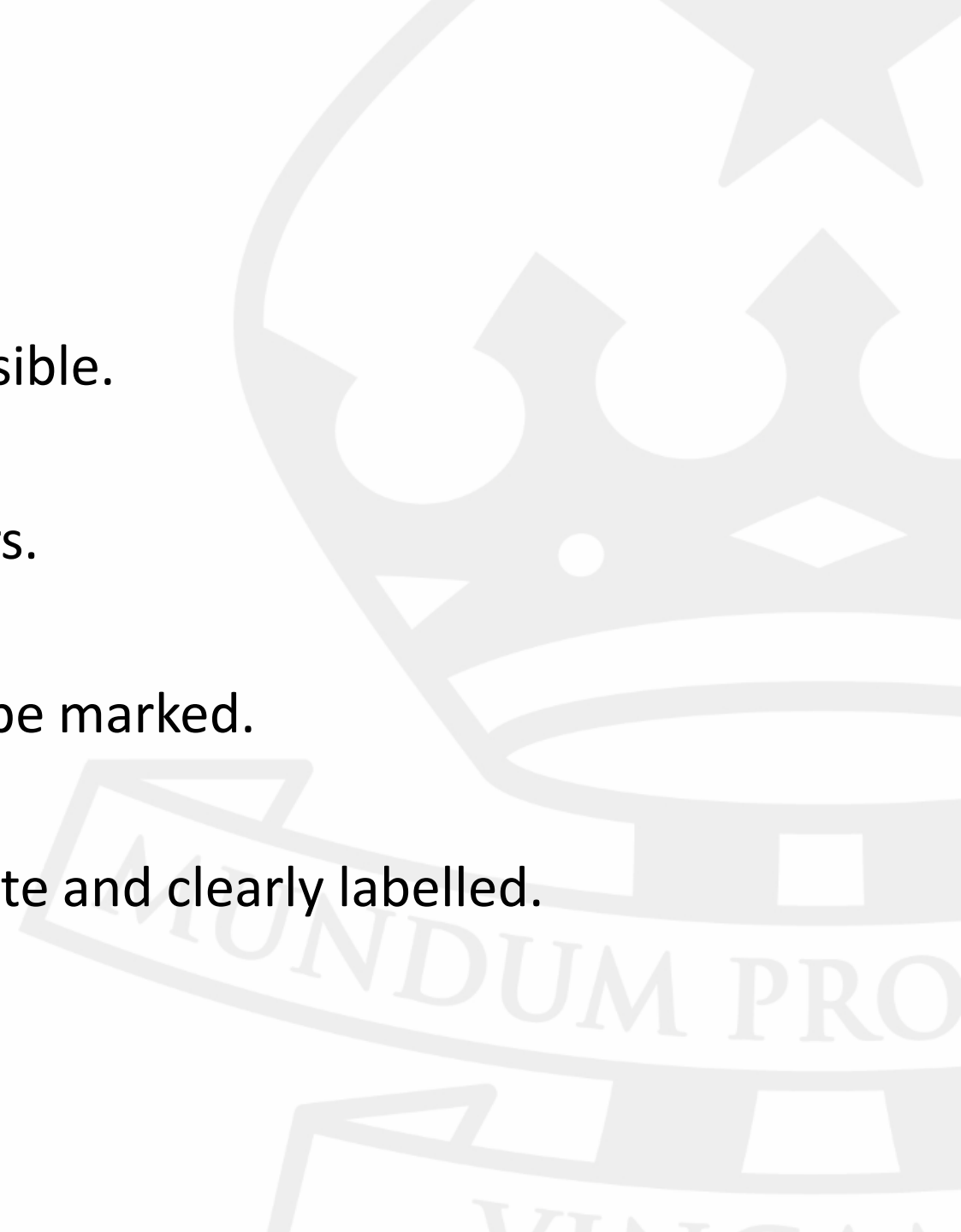
Presentation

Write legibly, keep your work as neat as possible.

Show all working and underline final answers.

Score through anything you do not want to be marked.

Ensure all graphs / diagrams / etc are accurate and clearly labelled.



After the exam...

Don't over-analyse. How you feel it went isn't always a true reflection. There's nothing you can do to change it.

Don't worry if your friends have attempted different questions or found different answers. It is about accumulating marks over the whole paper.

Have a physical and mental break – do something you enjoy with your friends or family. If you don't have an exam in the next couple of days, then take the rest of the day of your exam off.

Settle back into your Study Plan - begin preparing for your next exam.

If it is your final exam – celebrate!

Wellbeing

Managing stress and anxiety

If you become overwhelmed when studying. Hit 'pause' and have a short break.

Practise strategies for managing stress (deep breathing / visualisation)

Maintain a work – life balance

Talk things through with friends, parents, family and teachers

Don't dwell on your exams – focus on your preparation

Exercise

Build exercise into your routine – walk the dog / play football / go a run – whatever works for you!

Diet

Maintain a healthy diet and drink plenty of water.

Avoid sugary foods and drinks (especially energy drinks) – these will reduce your concentration levels and make you more lethargic.

Sleep

Quality sleep should be an important part of your routine.

Sleep is vital for consolidation – where your learning throughout the day is re-organised as long-lasting memories within the brain.

Try and stick to a bed time and wake up time – you should be aiming for around 8-10 hours of sleep each night.

Do something relaxing between studying and bedtime.

Avoid screen time near bedtime.

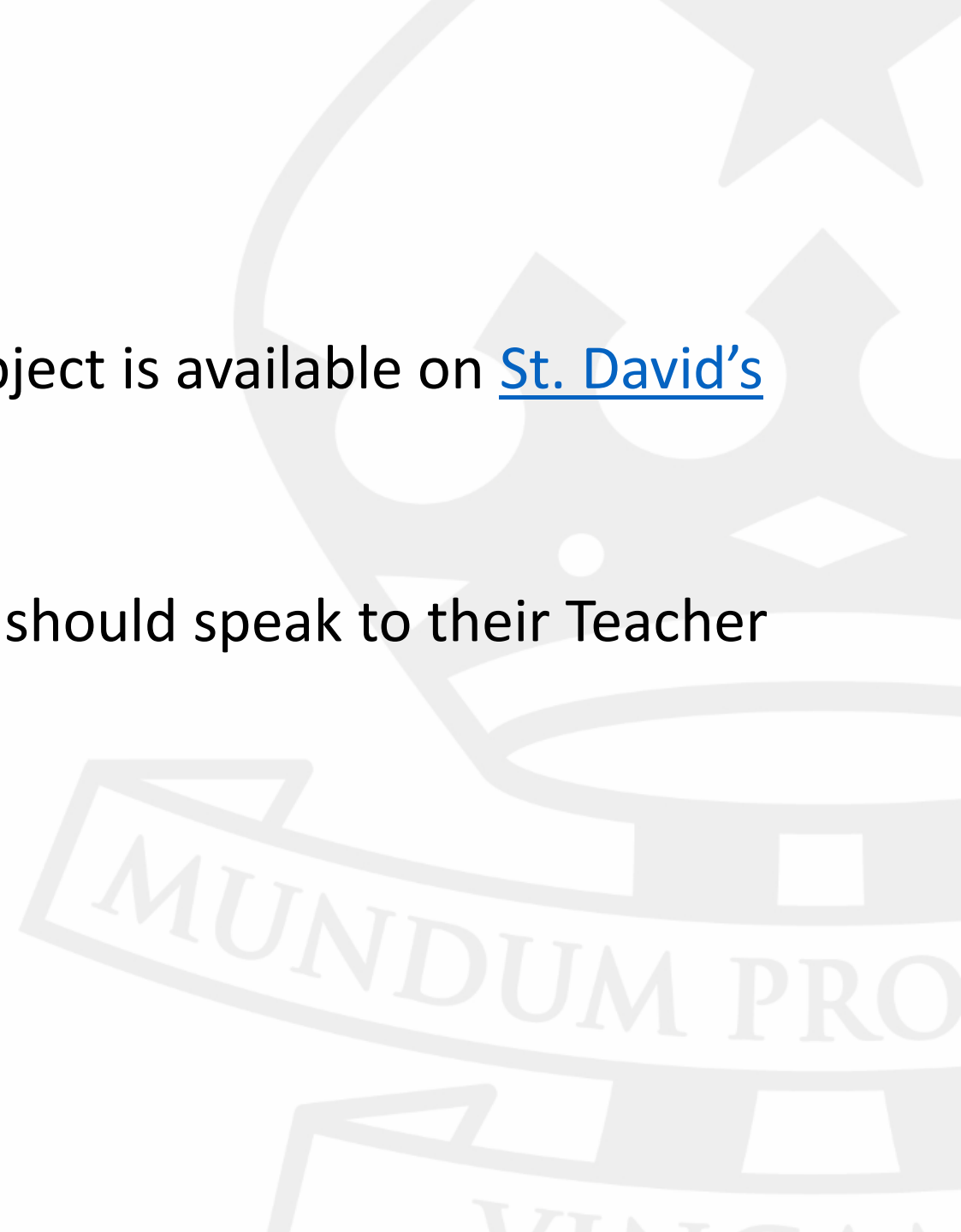
Avoid caffeine and high sugar food and drink.

Stick to your routine – sleeping-in or napping can have a huge impact on your sleep pattern for the next few days.

Subject specific signposts

Study Support information from each subject is available on [St. David's HS website](#)

Students who require additional support should speak to their Teacher or Guidance Teacher.



The Role of Parents

Help with organisation of studying and the night before exams

Create and resource a study space

Reassure them that they can do it

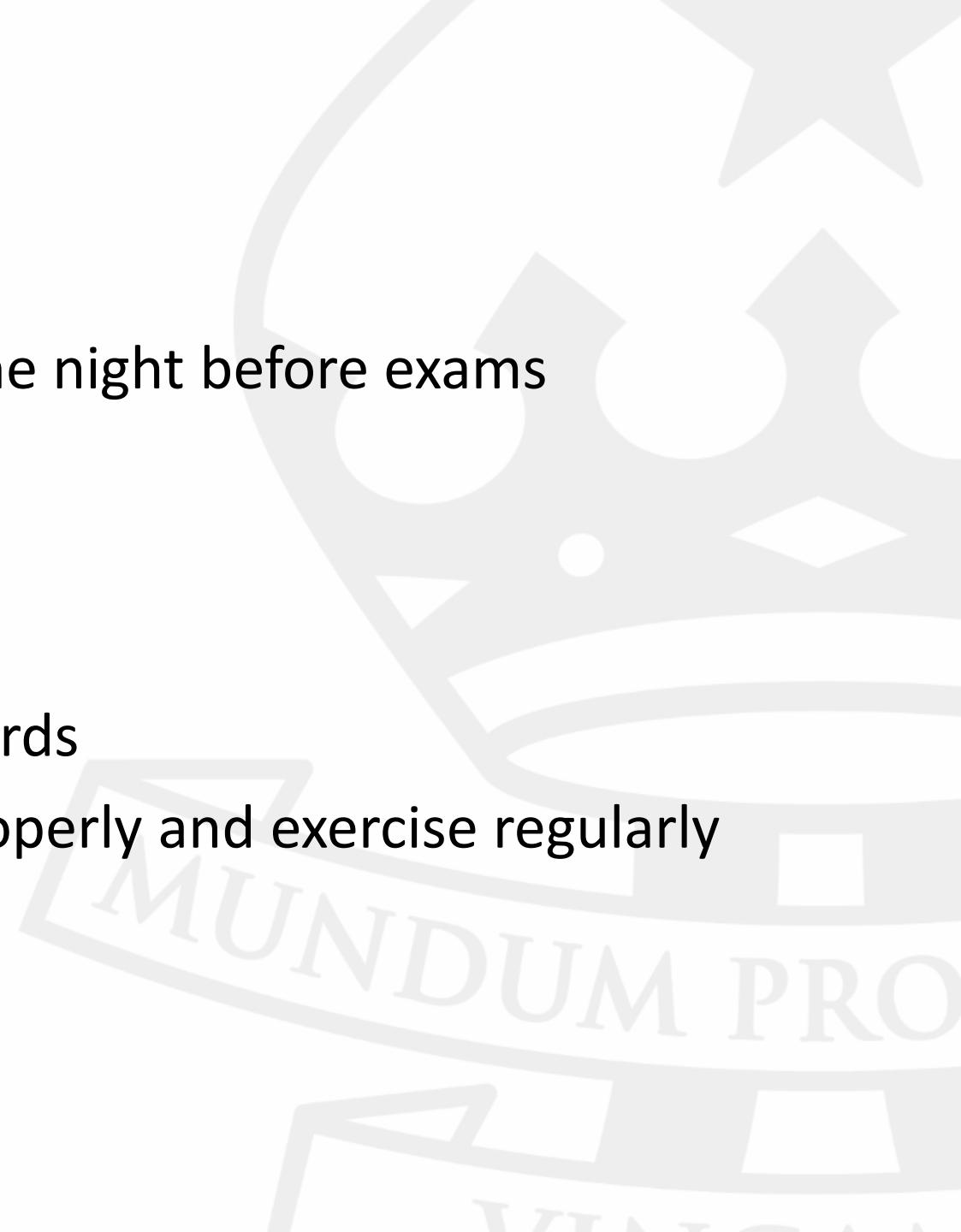
Minimise distractions and interruptions

Provide encouragement, praise and rewards

Make sure they get enough sleep, eat properly and exercise regularly

Help by testing them with their revision

Be there for them



Practical Tips for Parents

Always being available, supportive and encouraging will go a long way to help build confidence.

Help with organisation – study planning, timetable of exams – place these in prominent places around the house / keep a copy close to hand. Study space – make sure it is well resourced and distraction free: Ensure this is adhered to from all members of the family. Help them get organised the night before.

Establish routines – long term hard work to establish good study habits. Clamp down on procrastination.

Clear boundaries and consequences – e.g. no phone at the study space.

Offer to test them or ask them what they have learned

Practical Tips for Parents

Give additional incentives or treats for their efforts

Leave them a note wishing them good luck

Offer drinks and snacks to keep them going (avoid unhealthy foods which may affect concentration and energy levels)

Support healthy living through their diet, exercise and sleep.

Be a de-stresser: Stay cool, calm and collected at all times (even when you are not!). Support a young person's down time and actively support their wellbeing by joining in with practicing relaxation techniques. Be there for them, even if it is just for a chat.

If you are worried about them, sign post them to help (either a useful website or to their guidance teacher)

Support them on results day – you can't change the grades in the envelope but you can change what a young person does with them.

Useful links

The SQA provides a range of [Information for Learners](#) as well as [Past Papers and Marking Instructions](#) for every subject and level.

Parentzone is part of the Education Scotland website and provides a wide variety of information and support for learning and home and [revision](#).

[BBC Bitesize](#) have learning and [revision tools](#) for many subjects at National 5 and Higher level.

Many subjects utilise Heriot-Watt University's [SCHOLAR](#) resources. Where this is applicable, student's will have already been provided with user accounts.

[Childline](#), [NHS](#) and [YoungScot](#) have some tips on dealing with exam stress. Check out Young Scot's [5 Ways to Chill Out in 5 minutes](#).

Maddie Moate is a British television presenter, writer and YouTuber. She has produced some helpful videos focusing on exams, including [What's the Best Way to Study?](#) and [Dealing with Exam Stress](#).

FAQ

How long should students be studying for?

Between 45 + 90 minutes per day. This will increase in the build up to the exams.

ICT/Phones

Some of the most valuable resources are located online. It is advantageous to use electronic devices to access these, but only when it is not a distraction. Follow strict rules when using ICT such as – no phone / phone on 'do not disturb', no social media, and stick to the study plan at all times.

Music

There are advantages and disadvantages to letting young people listen to music whilst studying. It can block out other noises in the household, can relax them which can stimulate the brain and increase the chances of the information being absorbed into memory. However, loud music can be distracting and young people can focus on this rather than their studying. They may become more interested in their playlist than their work. And it can sometimes lead to day-dreaming... try and find a rule that works for the individual.

Exams FAQ

What happens if a student is late?

Contact the school immediately so that they can inform the chief invigilator (they will determine whether the candidate can be admitted late to the hall)

Depending on the length of time / type of exam they are late for, they may still be able to be admitted.

What happens if a student is unable to attend? (exceptional circumstances)

Contact the school immediately.

A medical certificate will be essential for the school to make an appeal for an award where a candidate is sick.

Any illness, accident, bereavement or family circumstances which may affect the student's overall performance, arising before or during the exams, should be discussed with the student's Guidance Teacher as soon as possible so that an application can be made to the SQA.

What happens if a candidate fails to attend?

Should a candidate fail to attend for no valid reason, then an asterisk will appear opposite the subject name on the student's award certificate. This may damage future employment prospects.

Exams FAQ

What should students wear to their exams?

Full school uniform. Candidates will have to leave bags, coats, etc at the back of hall so it is advisable for them to bring only what they need.

What is not permitted?

Electronic equipment such as **phones**, music players, earphones.

Tippex or any correction fluid/pens

Food, sweets or chewing gum – only water can be taken to your desk

Notes, books or paper of any kind

Pencil Cases

Sharing / borrowing of any equipment

Any pupil with a mobile phone on in the exam hall will be reported for a breach of regulations.

If you have any further questions then please contact the school to speak to the relevant Guidance Teacher.



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