



# **Thornhill Academy**

Pupils and Parents' Guide to  
Exams and Revision

## Changes to GCSEs for summer 2021

There has been a lot of speculation in the media about changes to next year's exams. Very little has changed from a pupil perspective and, as it stands, exams will still be held in full in May and June 2021.

Some adjustments have been made to the exam administration to enable more teaching time. The main changes which will affect the final exams are outlined below.

<b>Maths</b>	No change in exam content
<b>English Language</b>	No change in exam content
<b>English Literature</b>	Optional questions- pupils will not answer the poetry anthology question
<b>Science (combined and separates)</b>	Core practicals can be demonstrated rather than carried out by pupils to save teaching time. No change in exam.
<b>History</b>	Optional questions on exam papers (no Cold War unit)
<b>Geography</b>	Pupils are no longer required to carry out field work to save teaching time
<b>Religious Education</b>	No change
<b>BTEC Sport</b>	Centre assessed grades have been entered for 1 unit
<b>Art, Graphics and Photography</b>	100% portfolio assessment. No externally set assignment required.
<b>Hospitality</b>	Awaiting outcome of vocational consultation
<b>Design Technology</b>	In coursework there is now more emphasis on modelling rather than the final outcome as access to specialist equipment may be limited. Reduction in marks to 2 sections. No change in exam content
<b>MFL (French and Bengali)</b>	Speaking component will be based on teacher endorsement to save teaching time. Optional questions on exam papers
<b>Business</b>	No Change in exam content
<b>Travel and Tourism</b>	Centre assessed grades have been entered for 1 unit

## Year 11 Catch-up

The progress, outcomes and future destinations of you, our year 11 pupils, are the most important to us.

You have already been issued with a revision guide for each of your subjects and, where appropriate, lessons and homework activities are utilising these to support your revision skills.

As a priority for school catch-up we will begin by offering year 11 pupils additional study time in each of their subjects after school on a Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. This will start on:

**\*\*\*Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October\*\*\***

Pupils will be issued with a new timetable on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> where their P6 lesson will be added on and their school day will finish at 3:50pm.

We encourage all pupils to make the most of this opportunity for each of their subjects and ask for parental support in sharing the benefits of this additional contact time for their education.

The aim will be to focus on retention and retrieval of the course content to best prepare pupils for their exam success.

This will support but not replace pupils own independent homework and revision.



# Mock Exams

**2 weeks commencing 9<sup>th</sup> November**

To further prepare pupils for the final GCSE exams we will be holding our first Mock Exams in November.

Pupils will sit an exam in each of their subject areas. Each exam will cover the breadth of the curriculum completed so far. This will give an accurate indication of their current GCSE performance and support staff in making accurate predictions of final GCSE outcomes. Perhaps, more importantly, this will help pupils by experiencing real exam scenarios as well as gaining practice in preparing for exams.

*In light of last year's GCSEs being based on Centre Assessed Grades, mock exams have never been so important. These grades and their subsequent predictions could be used if exams are no longer able to go ahead.*

There will be a series of assemblies and guidance on how to prepare well for the exams.

Subject areas will continue to use revision guides and share strategies for how pupils can revise effectively.

This booklet will also share support strategies which pupils and parents can use.



**7 Ways that Mocks are Good for you**

by @inner\_drive | www.innerdrive.co.uk

1. Motivates you to do revision early
2. Helps you identify topics you need to revise
3. Tests effective revision strategies
4. You can get used to exam pressure
5. Allows you to practice exam techniques
6. Increases belief that exams are doable
7. It is an opportunity to ask for help

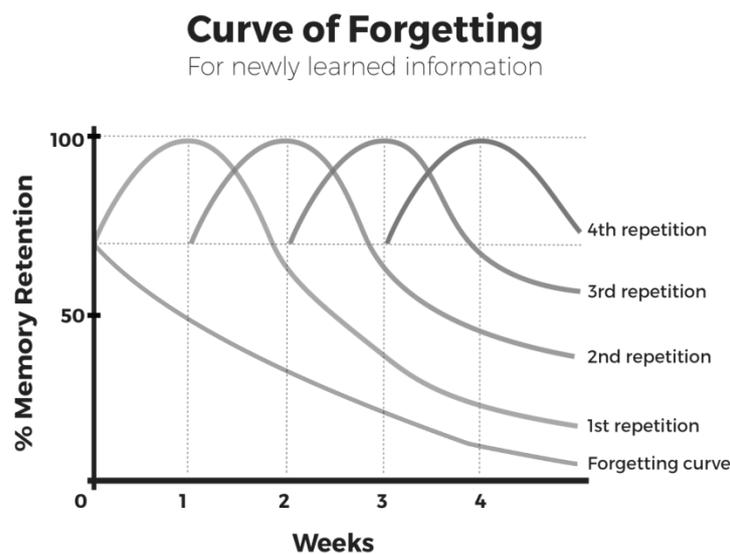


So what does work? Here are three of the most effective approaches to revision.

### 1. Distributed Practice

Rather than cramming all of their revision for each subject into one block, it's better to space it out – from right now, through to the exams. Why is this better? Bizarrely, because it gives them some forgetting time. This means that when pupils come back to it a few weeks later, they will have to think harder, which actually helps them to remember it. Furthermore, the more frequently pupils repeat and come back to a topic, the better they remember it.

Interleaving and mixing up different topics also makes their brains work harder and will support their ability to retain and retrieve the knowledge they need to be successful.



Students are often attached to their mobile devices and gain a lot from websites and apps. Some great online resources for revision are listed below:

<https://collegeinfo geek.com/>

<https://studywise.co.uk/gcse-revision/>

<http://www.gojimo.com/>

<https://revisionworld.com/gcse-revision>

## 2. Practice Testing

This technique is pretty straightforward – pupils keep testing themselves (or each other) on what they have got to learn. This technique has been shown to have the highest impact in terms of supporting pupils retrieving their knowledge. Pupils can do this easily by:

- Creating some flashcards, with questions on one side and answers on the other – and keep testing yourself.  
<https://collegeinfo geek.com/flash-card-study-tips/>
- Work through past exam papers – many can be acquired through exam board websites.
- Simply quiz each other (or yourself) on key bits of information.
- Create ‘fill the gap’ exercises for you and a friend to complete.
- Create multiple choice quizzes for friends to complete.



### 3. Elaborate Interrogation

One of the best things that pupils can do (either to themselves or with a friend) to support their revision is to ask why an idea or concept is true – and then answer that why question.

For example;

- In Science, increasing the temperature can increase the rate of a chemical reaction....why?
- In Geography, the leisure industry in British seaside towns like Barry Island in South Wales has deteriorated in the last 4 decades....why?
- In History, in 1929 the American stock exchange collapsed. This supported Hitler's rise to power....why?



So, rather than just trying to learn facts or ideas by reading them over and over, students should get into the habit of asking themselves why these things are true.

## How can I help as a parent?

- ✓ Encourage revision starting NOW.
- ✓ Provide a quiet space at home for your child to work.
- ✓ Use a revision timetable to strike a balance between work and social time.
- ✓ Talk to your child about their work. All pupils feel demotivated, overwhelmed and struggle at times, support them in overcoming these barriers.
- ✓ Give plenty of praise and encouragement.
- ✓ Expect your child to attend additional school sessions.
- ✓ Communicate with the school, we all want the very best for your child.



## **'In Case of Absence' (ICA) or Self-Isolation Work**

If you need to self-isolate or undertake schoolwork at home, work will be available on Class Charts and will be prefixed with 'ICA' so that you can tell the difference between this and regular homework.

Work can be submitted via class charts or you can use the exercise book which was provided at the beginning of term for any work that you undertake at home

You MUST bring your work in to school when you return.

If you have questions about your work you can message your teacher through Class Charts or email them directly:

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Mrs Willmore	Directory of Learning - English	<a href="mailto:willmore.g@thornhillacademy.com"><u>willmore.g@thornhillacademy.com</u></a>

## Exam Stress

Working towards exams can create feelings of worry and being under pressure. However, there are a range of things that you can do to help deal with the stress that you might be feeling.

# “It’s good to talk”

If you're anxious or just feel like you need to talk to someone you can reach out to:

### One of our fully trained and qualified Mental Health First Aiders

Mrs S Edmonds: edmonds.s@thornhillacademy.com

Mrs D Corkin: corkin.d@thornhillacademy.com

Mrs V Cavanagh: cavanagh.v@thornhillacademy.com

OR

### Our Academy Counsellor

Ms L Gray: gray.l@thornhillacademy.com

