

# Study Skills

# Aims of today's session



Exam preparation  
Learning and Memory  
Revision Strategy  
Exam Technique



FINISHED FILES ARE THE  
RESULT OF YEARS  
OF SCIENTIFIC STUDY  
COMBINED WITH THE  
EXPERIENCE OF YEARS

# Organisation

- Get organised from the outset!  
Folders – class notes, hand outs, assignments
- Concentration Span - get real!  
Be active in class  
Ask questions, answer questions  
Note taking - Linear and mind mapping



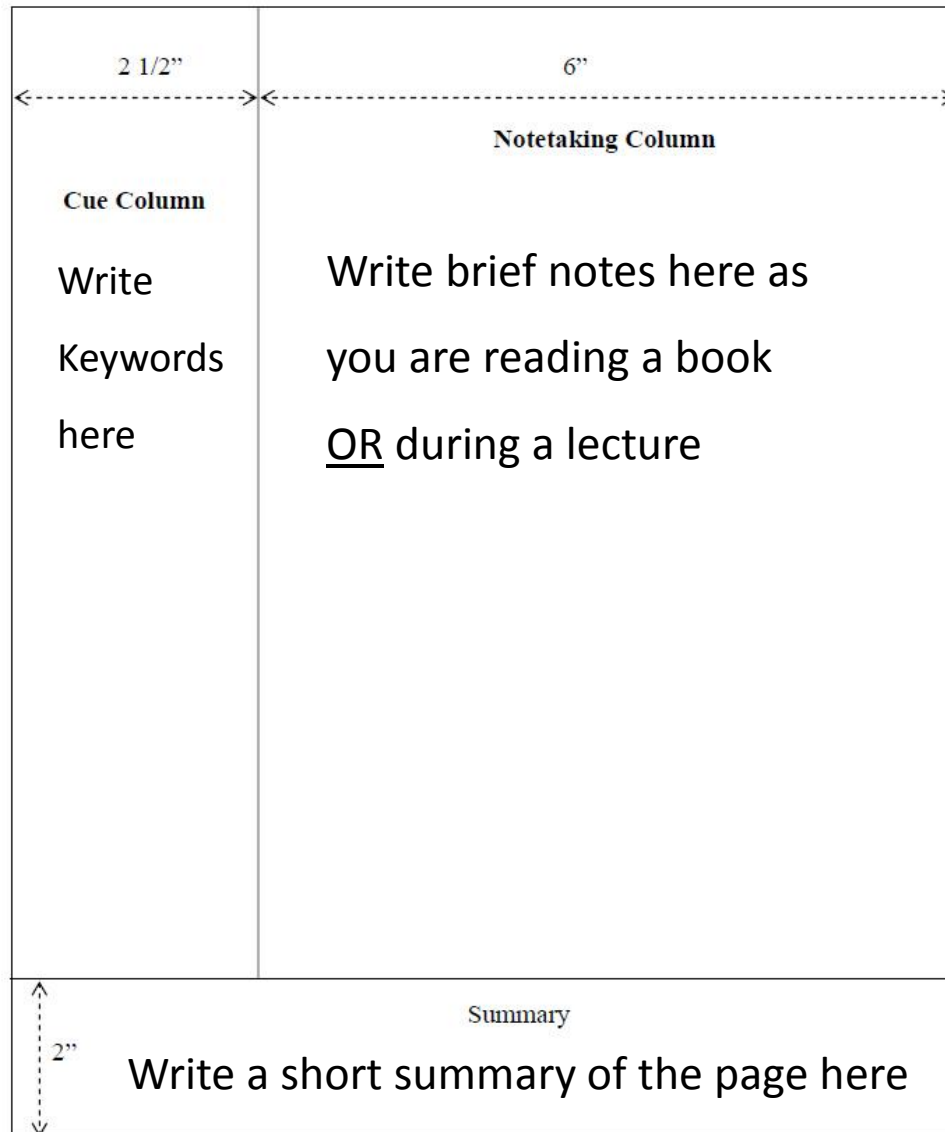
# Types of Notes

1. Linear
2. Cornell or 2 Column
3. Outline or skeleton
4. Mind or concept maps

How do you take notes?

## The Cornell Note-taking System

# Taking Notes

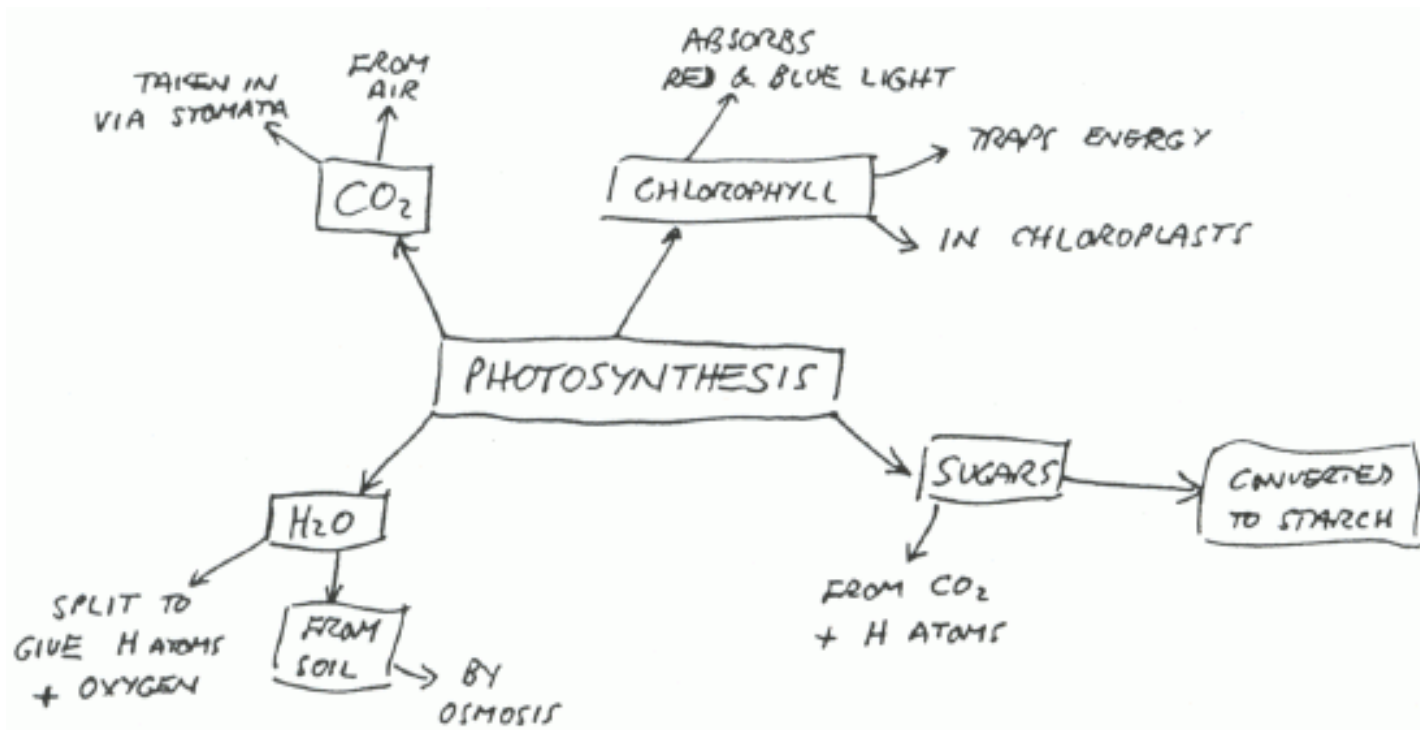


# Outline

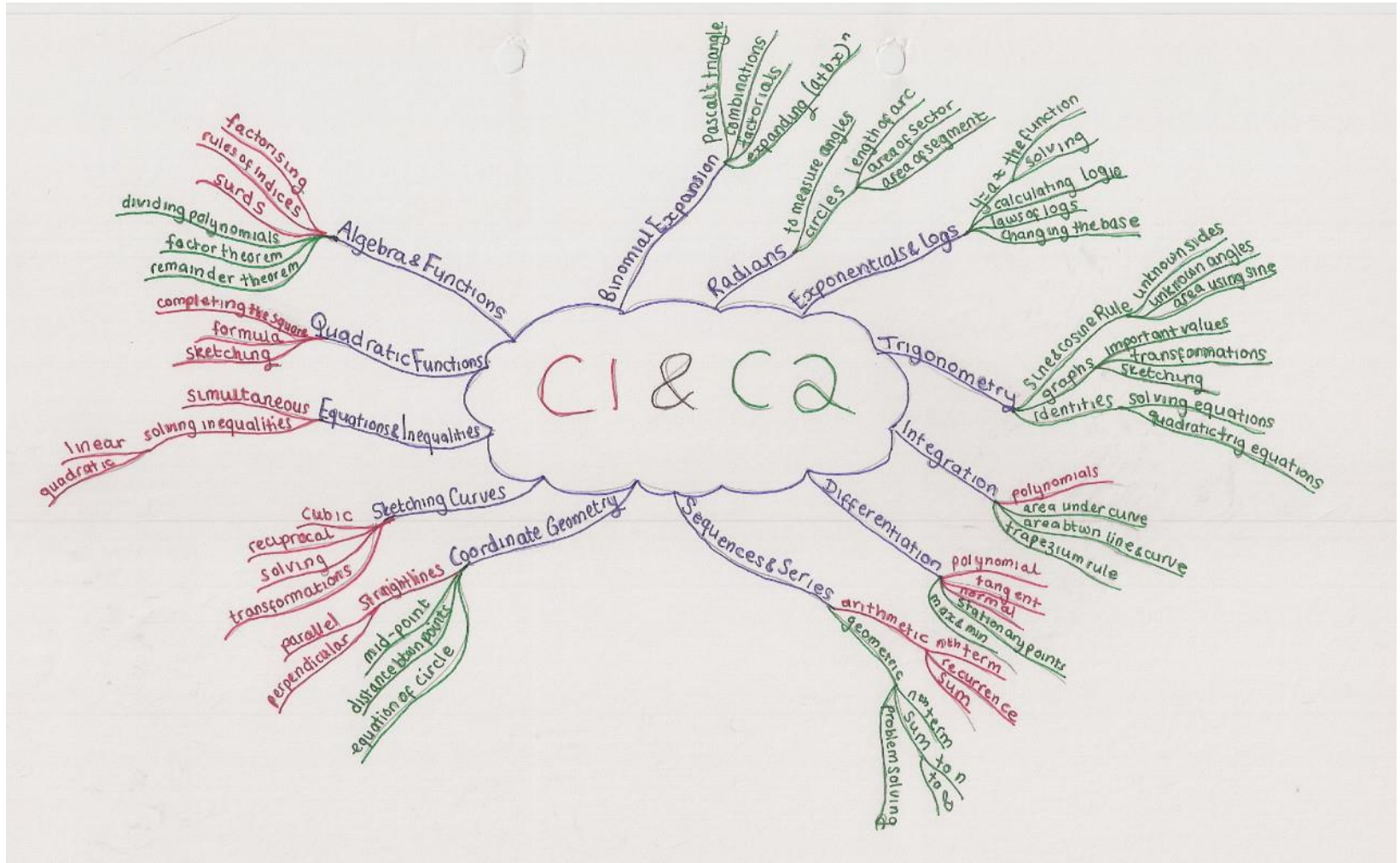
## The Art of Reading Actively

- A. Active = purposeful, critical, questioning.
- B. Look for Main Ideas
  - 1. Survey (SQ3R) for general ones (Ch 5)
  - 2. Read paragraphs for more specific ones
    - a) Each para usually has one main idea.
    - b) Usually in topic sentence (1st or last?)
- C. Look for Important Details
  - 1. e.g. proof, example, support for main idea
  - 2. Usually at least one per main idea
  - 3. Which do I consider important?
- D. In hunt for main idea and important details:
  - 1. Watch for signposts
    - a) Visual (layout, etc)
    - b) Verbal (cue words)
  - 2. Study diagrams, etc.
  - 3. Don't ignore difficulties
- E. Evaluate the text
  - 1. Be sceptical (Expect the author to prove)
  - 2. Compare with my own experience
  - 3. What do I get from it?
  - 4. Discuss with other students
- F. Make Notes:
  - 1. If I need them (for my purposes)
  - 2. At Recall stage (of SQ3R)
  - 3. Compare with other students'.
- G. Concentrate:
  - 1. By seeking understanding (not memorisation)
  - 2. and see Chapter 4 hints.
- H. Vary reading speed:
  - 1. according to purpose
  - 2. but not at expense of understanding.

# Concept Maps







# Mind Maps

# Time management

- Are you a good or a bad time keeper?
- Terminology  
Pressure/Stress/Panic
- Pressure  $\vee$  Stress - Can you cope?
- A lesson for the future



# There are 168 hours in every week How are you spending yours?

- Sleeping
- Going to the Gym
- Getting ready for class
- Going out with friends
- Cultivating relationships
- Meeting new people
- Going to class
- Studying for tests
- Part time job
- Cooking
- Cleaning
- Doing library research
- Taking a nap
- Exercising
- Catching up
- Commuting
- Getting around campus
- Attending events
- Revising
- Getting coffee
- Social Media
- Keeping in touch with family

# TIME MANAGEMENT

Put these in order of 1 (*most important*) to 11 (*least important*)

Earning some extra cash

Keeping fit / playing sport

Listening to music

Finding (or spending time with) a partner

Time with my family

Preparing lecture

Looking after my appearance

Watching TV

Job

Napping/rest

Planning my summer holiday

Socialising with friends



# The Benefits of Time Management

- You are more **productive**
- You reduce your **stress**
- You improve your **self esteem**
- You achieve **balance** in your life
- You avoid **meltdowns**
- You feel **more confident** in your ability to get things done
- You reach your **goals**

## **What is Time Management**

Simply making the most of your time and energy

# Energy Levels

- Evaluate your energy levels at different times of day
- Schedule tasks when you have the energy levels to match
- Morning Person? Evening Person?

Losing sleep is the easiest way to sabotage your energy levels



# Steps to Managing Your Time

1. Set Goals

2. Make a schedule

3. Revisit and revise your plan

# Common time management mistakes

- Failing to keep a to do list
- Not prioritising goals
- Failing to manage distractions
- Inability to say no
- Time Wasting



# Learn How to Tackle Time Wasters

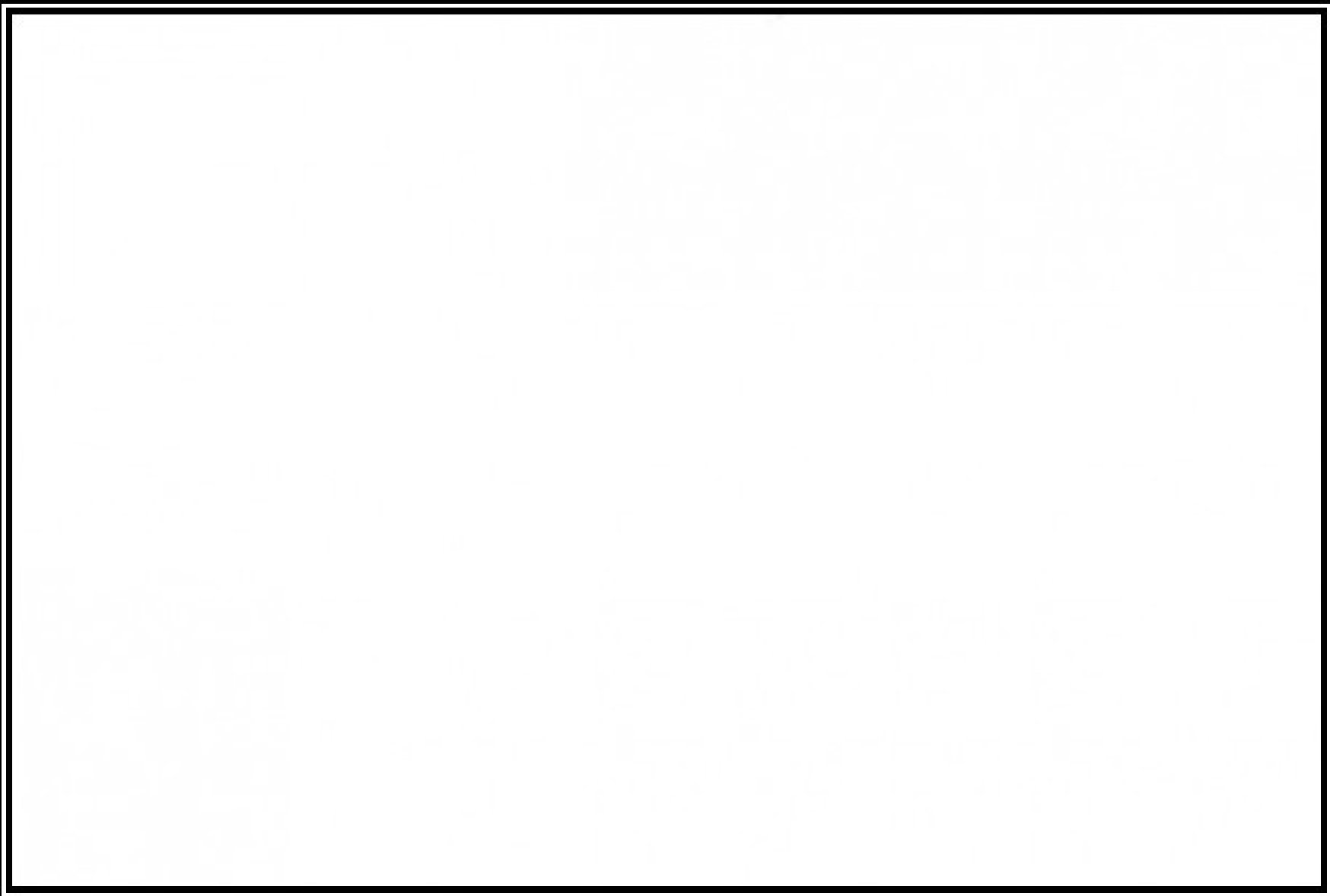


**Yeah, if you could just,  
come to the dark side,  
that'd be great.**

# Common time management mistakes

- Multitasking
- All work and no play

And ...



# PROCRASTINATION

I'll find a picture for it later.

# Procrastination

## Forms of procrastination

- Ignoring the task, hoping it will go away
- Underestimating how long it will take
- Overestimating your ability and resources
- Telling yourself that poor performance is okay
- Doing something else that isn't very important
- Believing that repeated minor delays won't hurt you
- Talking about a hard job rather than doing it
- Putting all your work on only one part of the task
- Becoming paralysed when having to make a decision

# How to Overcome Procrastination

- Win the mental battle by committing to being on time
- Set and keep deadlines
- Organise, schedule and plan
- Divide a big job into smaller ones
- Make a game of your work and make it fun
- Reward yourself when you're done
- Tell your friends and room mates to remind you of priorities and deadlines
- Learn to say NO to time wasters

# Memory



# A useful model!

## The Information Processing Model

Analogy between the Brain and a Computer

3 Sequential Processes:

- Registration - encoding to make it meaningful
- Retention - storage ready for future use
- Retrieval

# Atkinson/Shiffrin - (1968)

**Stage 1** Receive Information

**Stage 2** Some information then stored in Short term memory

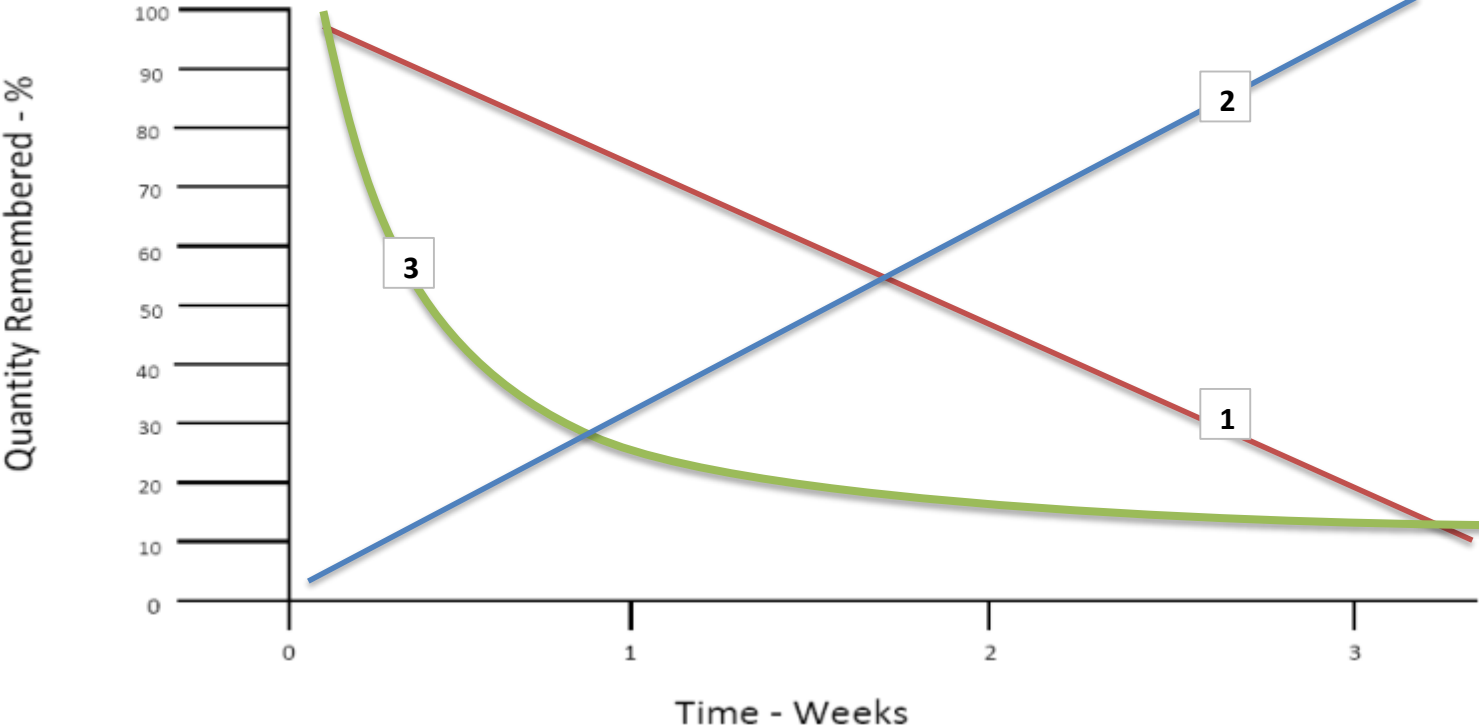
**Stage 3** Reworking/Rehearsal after which it is then stored in Long term memory

Emphasis on “**Elaborative Rehearsal**” where new information related to the original is introduced

Once in the long term memory information may be retained permanently or may decay with time



# The Curve of Forgetting



# Tony Buzan “The memory Guru”

Students retain only 4% of a lecture after 2 weeks

But they can retain 80% if effective reworking/rehearsal is undertaken –

Recommends:

- Discussion
- Assessments
- Revision
- Spidergrams
- Mind maps



# How to tackle Revision:

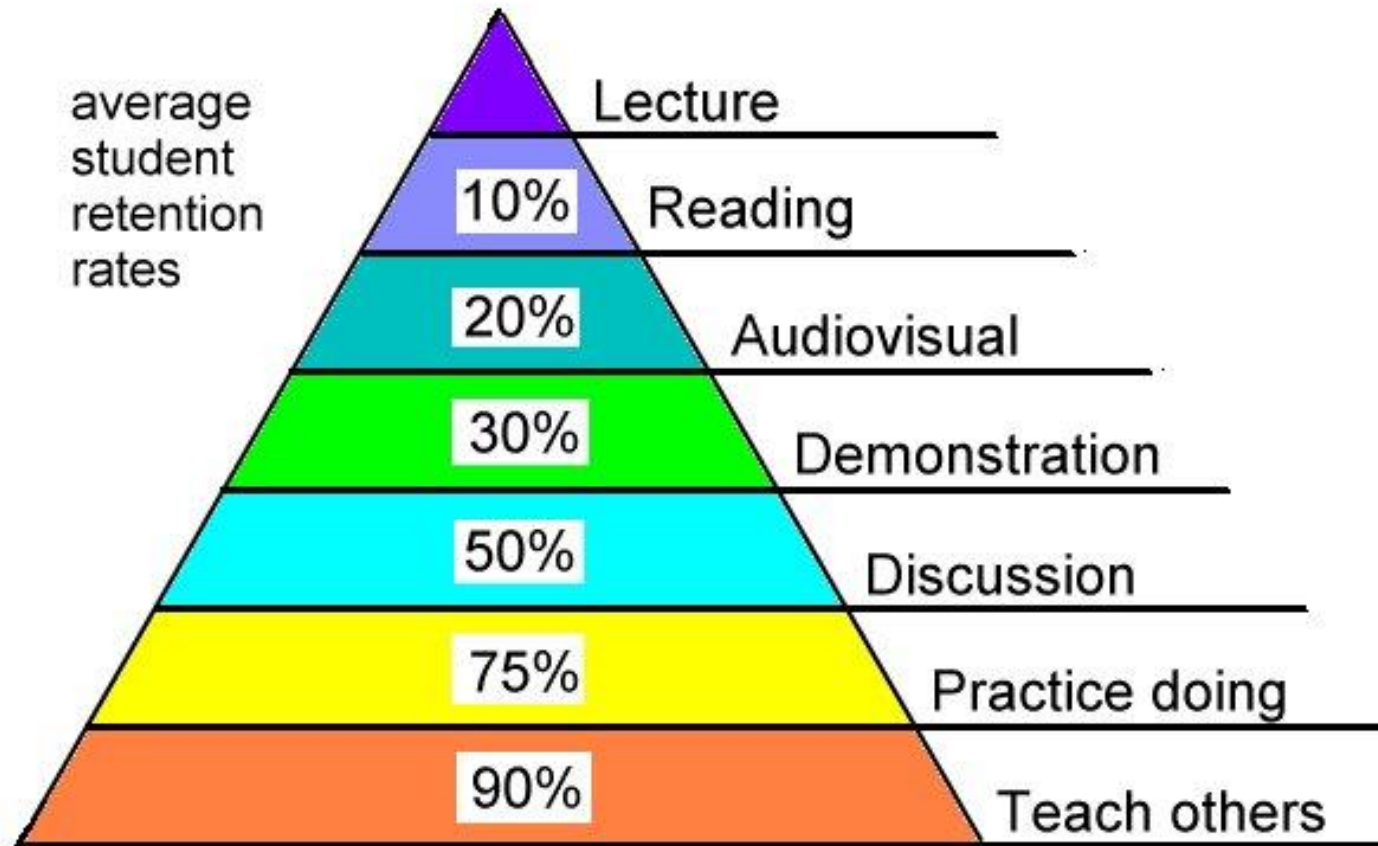
## Initial steps

- Deadline - Time Management - Revision timetable - Handout
- Comprehensive class notes
- Complete all assignments
- Ongoing rehearsal - Buzan - 4% rule!
- List all topics covered
- List assignments
- Identify topics taught but not assessed - crunch!
- Past papers - every subject has its specific requirements - your revision technique must vary accordingly

# How to revise

- Don't be passive!
- Reading class notes/books - danger!
- Condensing notes
- Memory cards
- Thematic approach
- Timed essays
- Past papers

# Learning Pyramid



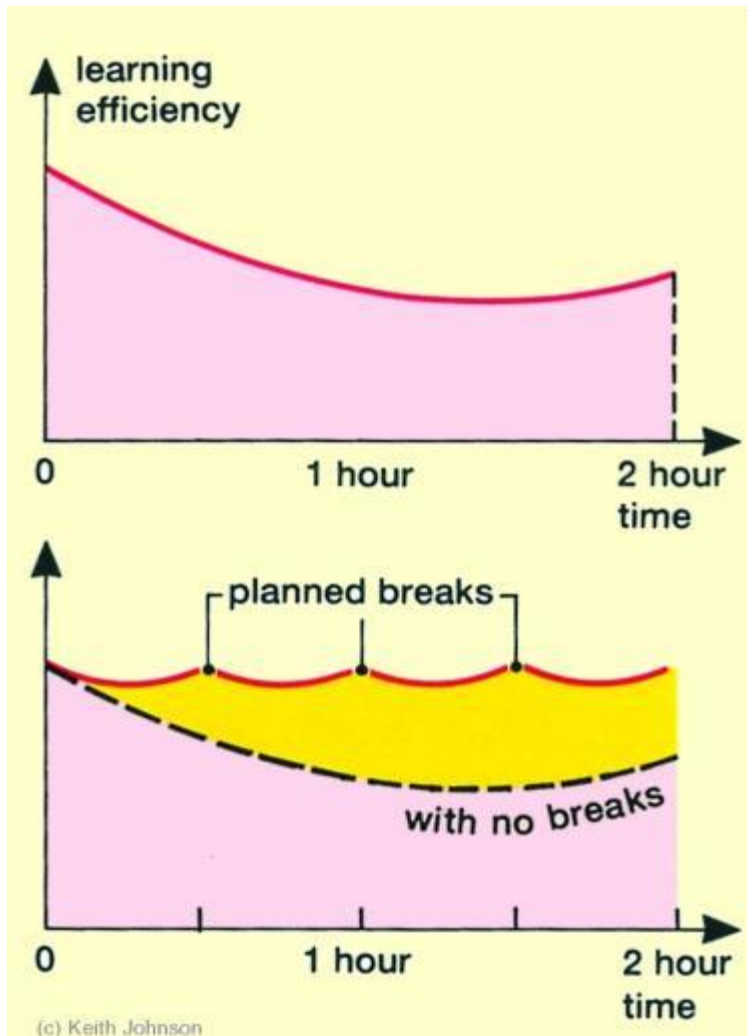
Source: National Training Laboratories, Bethel, Maine

# How to revise

- Timed essays
- Past papers
- Mind Maps
- Key Cards
- Visual Images
- Wallpaper
- Key Words
- Learning and repeating



# How should you revise?



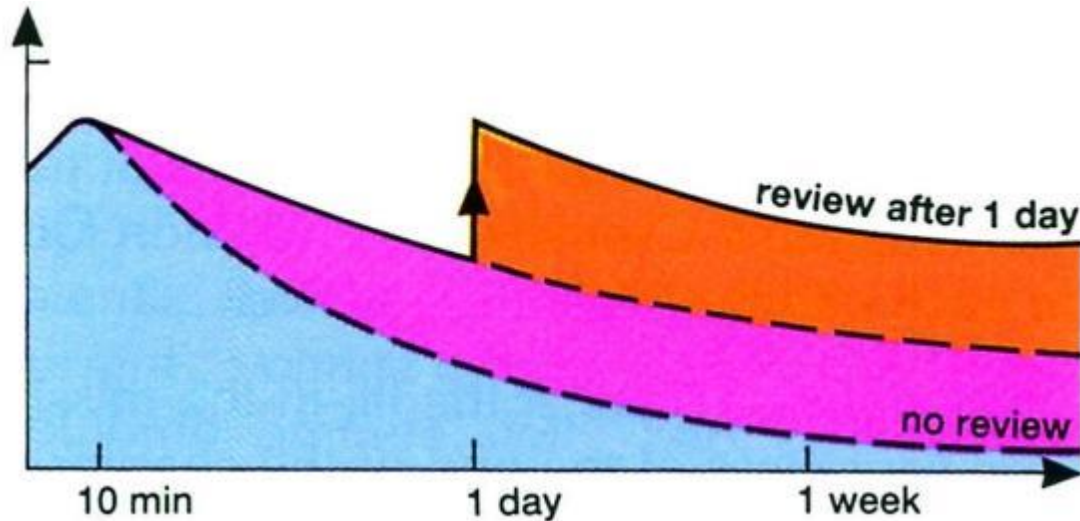
← One solid session

← 4 shorter sessions

← The yellow area shows the improvement

If you quickly re-revise again, after **1 day**, then it falls even more slowly! Good!

Analyse the new graph:





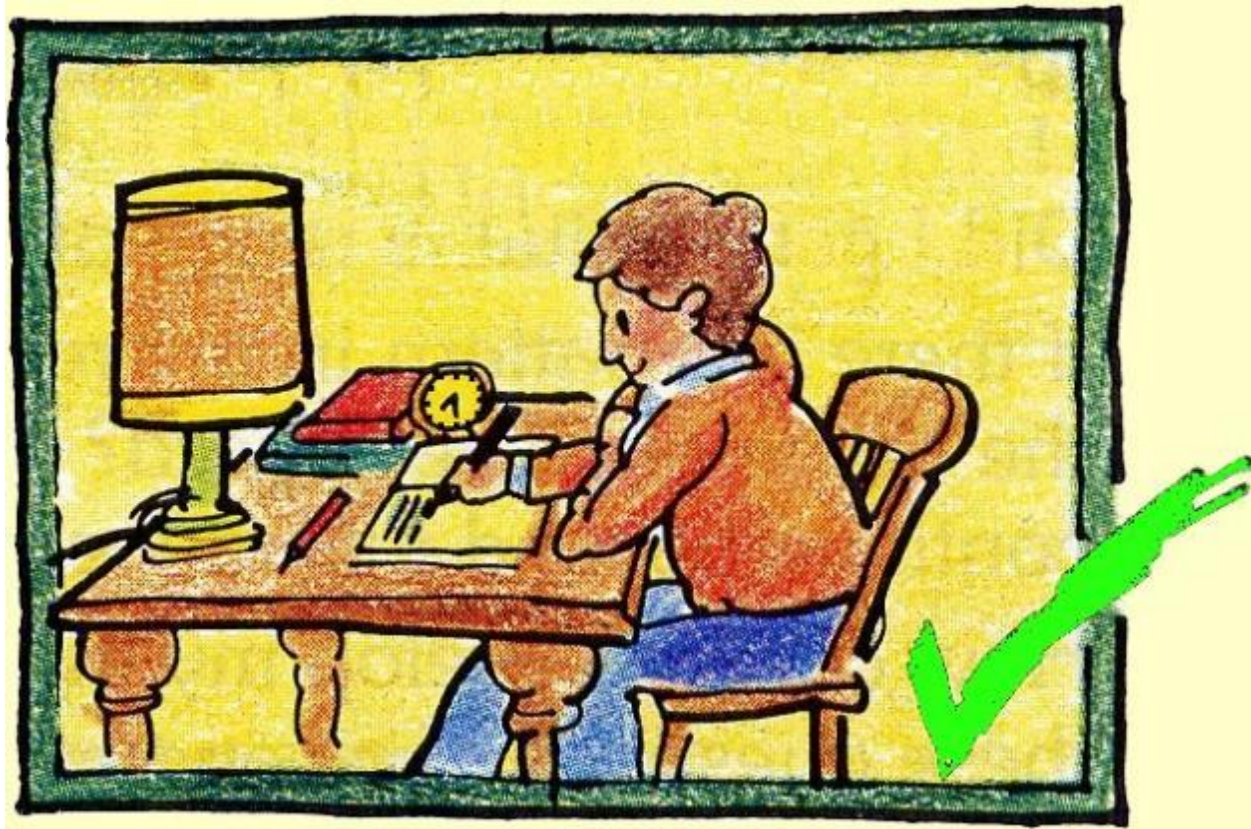
# Where should you revise?

## What's wrong with this picture?



# Where should you revise?

What is better here?



# Exams

- Why do people fail exams?
- Not taking responsibility for their own learning
- Failure to read instructions
- Failure to read questions properly
- “Analyse the style and tone of the discussion and what can be inferred about the relationship between these two people”
- Lack of preparation
- Inappropriate preparation
- Question choice
- Not being familiar with the format of the paper/style of the questions
- Not following the marking scheme
- Hard work!

# Why do people fail exams?

- Not managing time/running out of time
- Getting stuck on one question
- Lack of planning
- Waffle
- Poor academic style
- Wrong/lack of equipment
- Last minute preparation
- Panic
- Lack of effort - physical and mental
- Bad luck

# Tackling essays - Systematic Approach

- Read and analyse the question
- Process & content
- Brainstorm ideas
- Rationalise into a structured plan
- Write the answer whilst focussing on expression, emphasis & English



# Introduction

- Point
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Evidence
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Conclusion



# Academic Writing

Whatever you do - articulate yourself within an “**Academic Framework**”

Based on:

- Structure
- Logic
- Evidence
- Academic conventions
- See handout - academic style



# Academic Style

## Academic Style

Good Characteristics (Academic Style is: )	Weak Characteristics (Academic Style is not: )
Concerned with evidence/examples	Full of generalisations/prejudice/assertions
Thoroughly referenced	Unsourced
Analytical	Purely descriptive
Precise*	Vague
Specific	Opinionated
Cautious*	Emotional/sweeping
Relevant	Full of Waffle
Clear	Badly Written: Mis-spelt Ungrammatical Badly punctuated
Using specialised language appropriately	Full of jargon
Neither too formal nor too informal	Pompous or slangy/colloquial
Logical	Illogical



# Try one of these

Should the death penalty be reintroduced in the UK?  
Discuss.

A smoker who contracts a smoking related disease should not be treated by the NHS. Discuss.

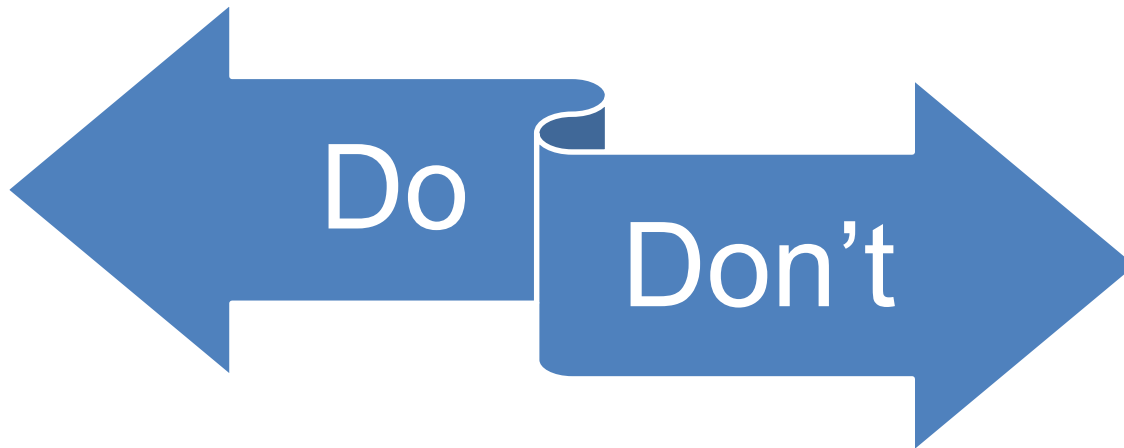
Torture is never justified. Discuss.



# Revision 'dos and don'ts':

On a blank piece of paper, write '*dos*' (on my right) and '*don'ts*' (on my left)

2 minutes!



# The Examiner

**Examiners** are rarely seen in the wild. They work long hours and spend much of their time alone. They are busiest in the spring and summer and can be dangerous.

**Species:** Teacher  
**Habitat:** Dark rooms with easy access to coffee  
**Diet:** Coffee and takeaway food  
**Waking hours:** 7am to 2am

## Likes

Neat handwriting  
Questions answered in order  
Accurate spelling  
Clearly numbered questions  
Finishing marking

## Dislikes

Scruffy exam scripts  
Searching for the rest of your answer  
Poor grammar  
Notes to the examiner



# Compare and contrast a monkey and a bear



Compare



Contrast

# Try this

- **Questions to work on**
- Compare and contrast two approaches to revision
- Evaluate your revision so far
- Outline a method to prepare for your summer exams
- Summarise the '*dos and don'ts*' of revision



Embrace it and good luck!

