Exam Revision Techniques

• Make a mind map or diagram to get a sense of the scope of the topic
• Try prompting your memory before you read your notes. Ask yourself:
  o What did I think about this topic?
  o Did I like this topic?
  o Think yourself back to when you first heard it mentioned this year
• Add notes or key words to the mind map as your revision progresses
• Condense information down to key words and phrases. Make bullet point lists (max. 7 bullet points)
• Try splitting the page into two vertical halves – on one side, put the key concepts and on the other side, an example or a few supporting details
• Write key points on post-its and post them around your room so you see them everywhere
• Record a summary of your revision notes and listen to the recording on the bus / in bed / while walking
• Try talking to yourself in the mirror – it can help to say stuff out loud
• If you like working in groups, try to get together with friends to compare your understanding of the topic (but be aware that sometimes this can add to your confusion!)

Seeing the relationships between things

• Use different coloured pens or highlighters to categorise ideas
• Draw arrows between related ideas
• While reading, stop now and again and make lists of key information such as:
  o key facts
  o key concepts
  o important authors
  o key theories
  o key terms
  o key experiments

• Try to get two ideas for the price of one by linking concepts using phrases like “is similar to”
• / “contrasts with” / “is an example of” / “develops idea X”
• You may be asked to evaluate key theories or concepts, so try to think of a couple of pros and cons for each one
• You may be asked for examples in the exam, so if possible, think of one or two real-life examples that illustrate a theory or concept
Learning Development

- Condense your notes by putting key info on one cards/piece of paper. Example of condensed notes on a key concept:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-bureaucratic organisations (Heckscher)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- is reaction to / contrasts with bureaucratic ethos (Weber)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. Google / housing cooperatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TQM, Flexible, Flat hierarchy, Consensus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Plays to individual strengths of team members
- Good for handling change but ...
- Challenging for staff – need to “know everything”
- Unclear roles can cause conflict

- When reading your notes, ask yourself “What are the central debates/issues in this topic?” When you have identified these, outline your own view on these debates.

Testing yourself

- Put the mind map away and after a few hours/days, try to re-create it without referring to your notes - did you include the same stuff? Did you forget anything 😞? Have you added anything new since last time 😊?

- If you tried the split-page idea above, fold the page or cover up one half and use the other half as a prompt – can you remember what concepts the details/examples relate to? Can you remember your examples / details by looking only at the concepts?

- Write a key idea on one side of a card or post-it note and an example on the other side – test yourself by trying to remember what’s on the other wide, then flip over to check.

- Also using cards / post-it notes
  - Write a key idea on one side and one or two relevant authors / experts on the other side
  - Write a question on one side and the answer on the other side

- Test yourself after a few hours, then after 1 day, then again after 3 or 4 days. Repetition will help you to remember.
Learning Development

- Use past papers to practise applying what you know: solving problems, ‘brainstorming’ your response to an essay question

- Use past papers to practise with different memory cues, especially for essay answers:
  - What is my opinion?
  - Did I like this topic?
  - How did I feel about this topic when I first heard about it?

- Remember to practise timing yourself – set an alarm and write out your answer under “test conditions” (without looking at your notes and in the time limit)

- Set your timed answer aside for a few hours / days and then go back and evaluate it with reference to your notes – how did you do? Did you remember the important info? Did you answer all parts of the question?

Finally

- Remember to take regular breaks – both physical and mental. Your brain needs oxygen and it needs time to reflect and absorb.