

Try. Fail. Correct. Try Again.

This is the advice of Professor John Dunlosky who, in 2013, reviewed 1,000 scientific studies looking at 10 of the most popular revision strategies in order to measure their effectiveness (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-22565912>). The results are surprising, with some strategies even hindering memory, but the two to take students to the top turn out to be:

- Spread revision out over as long a period of time as you can (i.e. START NOW if you aren't already in full swing) and do it at frequent and regular intervals;
- Test yourself over and over again with flashcards.

If your son is about to take exams this summer, he will have participated in two first class revision sessions run by *Elevate Education UK*, a leader in delivering study skills to schools. If he has followed the advice, he will have taken ownership of his learning and will be working steadily in an organised way, project managing the tasks and setting himself clear deadlines. Some of their advice is very practical and much of it supports Dunlosky's findings:

- Use a combination of visual and auditory systems (images, diagrams, recording your own voice, reading notes aloud)
- Create flash cards using memorize.com, Anki (<http://ankisrs.net>) or memrise (<https://www.memrise.com>) or test yourself using Quizlet (<https://quizlet.com/>)
- Develop Semantic Learning Techniques, connecting what you don't know to what you do know (memory journeys and mnemonics)

Every student is different, and will be handling the demands of this emotionally charged period in various ways. You know your son best and supporting your son will vary according to his individual needs and strengths. Remember, your support, encouragement and interest can make a spectacular difference to your child's motivation and ability to cope with the academic and organisational challenges of the next eight weeks.

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