



Chenderit School

A VISUAL ARTS COLLEGE

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Dear Parents and Carers

In a few weeks' time, students in year 8 will be sitting their end-of-year exams, and as part of their preparation, they have been doing a unit of work during tutor time on exam preparation and revision. During some of the discussions in each tutor group it became clear to us that we could help parents support their child much more usefully if we sent home some key information and advice. Therefore, we have asked subject teachers for information about what exactly students will be tested on, and when the assessments will take place.

We have also compiled some advice that may be of help when discussing the tests: the comments and suggestions are offered to help you respond to any questions or concerns your child may have. We want everyone to make the best of the opportunities their schooling offers, and that includes learning to show themselves at their best in exam conditions.

We need to remind students that they have already had practice in key stage 2, and many displayed fabulous skills and attitudes when they did so.

In many ways, a good comparison to use with your child is that of athletes preparing for the Olympics, up to four years away. Athletes do not hope to succeed on the basis of last-minute cramming; they do not face their Olympic trials as "a chance to find out what I don't know" and the start of their journey. They realise that success starts early, with good habits and skills built up and consolidated over many hours of practice.

In subject lessons, teachers will give more subject-specific guidance, and in tutor time there are opportunities to discuss revision skills and how to manage time. Students will be given a copy of the table showing what the exams will cover in each subject. More detailed lists of topics to revise are set out on a separate attachment for maths and English.

We hope you find these comments of use, and welcome any questions or comments you might have to help amend our guidance for future reference.

Yours sincerely

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Preparing for end-of-year exams in years: a guide for parents

Schools have set end-of-year exams in different forms for many years, but with the changes to GCSE exam specifications they now have a much greater significance. Formal exams are now the largest part of GCSE assessment, including in subjects we might think of as generally practical, such as PE.

In the sections below I have set out answers to a number of questions you, or your children may have about the exams: I hope they will help you support them to make the most of the opportunity the tests present.

Why have end-of-year tests?

Experience tells us that it is not just knowledge of a particular subject that leads to GCSE exam success. Many other things have an impact: revision, time management, being able to read and respond to an exam paper, generally “exam technique”. It makes sense that if we want to get good at something, a sport, a performance, even a driving test, we practise in advance.

There are other reasons too: there is a great deal of recent research that shows regular testing helps us remember more. The effort that goes in to retrieving knowledge helps cement or reinforce that knowledge, making it easier to apply it in unfamiliar circumstances.

What should students revise?

I have asked subject staff to give a brief overview of what has been covered. Students should use their exercise books and other resources (for example websites) to refresh their memory.

How should students revise?

Sadly, right up to year 11 and beyond, a few students will still say, “I don’t know how to revise.” This is a shame, because teachers, parents and other sources such as BBC Bitesize or SAM learning will offer good advice. Often this is advice of a general nature: plan your revision; use “chunking” and work in time slots of around 40 minutes, with a break before the next; take exercise; sleep well.

What should students actually do when they revise?

Ideally, revision starts on day one of any course, and for many students it does. Keeping good notes, catching up on anything missed, checking understanding and re-reading are all things the most successful students begin early on.

As exams approach students should check and organise their notes: do they have everything they need? Students should check with the guidance they have received from the teacher: what will this test cover?

Then, systematically students should set about reviewing or revising

Is re-reading enough?

Re-reading is important. If you are studying a literature text, for example, it is vital.

For all other subjects, the best advice we can give is to make our revision active. The simplest method is one students will be familiar with: look, cover, write, check. This is the way many of us learn new spellings.

The same principle works equally in other subjects. I first remember reading this advice in the back of an old chemistry textbook: it is stunningly simple, but very effective. Take a topic you need to know about: write down the keyword on a blank piece of paper; write down everything you need to know about it. Then check with a good source – your notes, a textbook or reliable website.

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This principle works very well when you need to grasp a big idea. You can add detail, in the form of a mind-map.

If you need to learn details in a specific sequence, you may need a mnemonic: most of us remember the colours of the rainbow or planets in the solar system in this way.

Often we need to understand a process: here a diagram helps – and we should look, cover, draw and check.

If we need to learn a list of dates a timeline can be helpful, and understanding of how and why one things led to another can help when there is a clear sequence. Otherwise, we need to learn: look, cover, write, check.

Many students find reading and reciting aloud key ideas, phrases or definitions helps.

Self-testing is the key: we can learn to recall many things by writing a single point on flashcard, with a term on one side and a definition or example on the other. We can look at one side, and recall what is on the other.

How else can students practise?

In something like maths, practice papers, trying to apply knowledge in new situations is vital.

In other subjects, practising answering exam-style questions is of tremendous importance.

There are two important examination skills that develop with practice: reading the questions and applying knowledge in unfamiliar situations.

Most examinations test knowledge, skills and understanding.

In order to achieve, students need to know things – information, names, facts, dates, place, quotations. These need to be learned, as described here. They can be tested through recall activities.

Students also need to have acquired skills of reading, analysing, assessing, of carrying out calculations. These need to be practised, by carrying out longer answer problems.

Reading exam questions carefully, underlining keywords and asking yourself, “What do I know that is relevant here?” is a vital exam skill. This can be practised by looking at past papers or examples. Parents can help, when students are stuck, by asking questions like, “What have you done in the past that can help you with this?”

Understanding why things are important, how they link to other things we know is vital in making the most of our knowledge. If we understand how or why a scientific process happens, we are more likely to remember details of it, and be able to apply what we know appropriately.

Students can practise this skill by asking themselves big questions that involve assessing, evaluating or justifying. Questions such as, “What is the most important or significant reason or cause...?” draw on understanding.

Students should increasingly look for the prompts in questions that alert them: is this a *how* question or a *what* question?

Sometimes the best way to revise understanding is to create a mind-map, which allows students to see connections between different ideas.

Preparing for end-of-year exams in years: a guide for parents

Is working with someone else effective?

It can be, for some people, as long as they are motivated to work; for some, the relaxed setting of working with a friend is a distraction.

Once again, the key is to make the revision active – setting questions, problems and challenges and checking their responses.

How should we deal with examination stress?

One of the reasons for having trial exams is to get used to working to time, so that the real exams are less unfamiliar.

As with anything, some students are far too relaxed, unwilling to commit the energy and effort needed to secure a good result. Others, often ambitious and hard-working students, feel under stress.

We all need to learn how to work with our stress; some psychologists recommend distraction, or positive self-talk. Last year a BBC documentary screened at exam time showed how you can manage the adrenalin that is a consequence of stress by telling ourselves that we are not afraid, but rather excited. Apparently, the physical feelings are the same: we can trick our bodies into thinking we are actually enjoying the experience. This has the effect of calming negative feelings.

And, of course, the familiar messages hold true: as long as we do our best, no one will complain.

But my son or daughter has said they have tried and cannot learn, or remember anything – what do I say to them?

Like anything, some of us find learning easier than others, but motivation has a massive effect. A number of students who find school subjects hard will learn to drive (both theory and practice) with no problem, because they are motivated to do so. I remember seeing a year 11 student, who apparently struggled to recall factual knowledge in his school subjects, displaying an encyclopaedic knowledge of the football grounds and managers of all the football league clubs. Had he been motivated to do so, he could equally have learnt names and details of all the elements in the Periodic Table!

As a parent, how can I help?

Support and encouragement is a key role, offering to explain, if we can, where there are difficulties; offering to test, using the flashcards the student has made; testing vocabulary; praising hard work and concentration.

K P Taylor May 2018

End-of-year exams Year 8 information

Subject	Exam date and time A side	Exam date and time B side	What will the exam consist of?	What should students revise?
Art	Week beginning Monday 11 th June	Week beginning Monday 11 th June	Students will complete a timed observational drawing during their art lesson.	Students can't really revise for a drawing exam- but by practicing their observational drawing skills they will increase their chances of success. Students should remember to keep looking- to draw what they see, not what they know is there...
English	Monday 11 th period 2	Monday 11 th June period 1	30 minutes reading 30 minutes writing	Key grammatical terminology; Dickens; writing to describe
Geography	8AGg1 Wednesday 13 th June period 3 8AGg2 Thursday 15 th June period 4 8AGg3 Wednesday June 13 th period 3	8B Gg1 Monday 11 th June period 3 8B Gg2 Tuesday 12 th June period 2 8B Gg3 Thursday 14 th June period 1	Short and longer data response style questions from a map, graph, photograph or other resource question One extended answer One hour assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settlements in developing countries (push and pull factors, shanty towns and self-help schemes) • Fieldwork and data presentation techniques used in Stratford • Tectonics – plate boundaries
History	8A1 Tuesday 12 th June period 2 8A2 Thursday 14 th June period 5 8A3 – Thursday 14 th June period 5	8B1 – Wednesday 13 th June period 3 8B2 – Monday 11 th June period 3 8B3 – Wednesday 13 th June period 3	One hour exam, four questions: one on source inference, one on key features, one on consequences, one on importance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The slave trade and life on a plantation • Segregation and the Civil Rights movement • Causes of the First World War • Trench warfare • The Treaty of Versailles • Hitler's actions 1933-39
Maths	Tuesday 12 th June period 3	Tuesday 12 th June period 5	One hour Exam. Non calculator	Please see attached
Maths	Friday 15 th June period 3	Friday 15 th June period 5	One hour Exam. Calculator required	Please see attached
Modern Foreign Languages	8A Monday 11 th June, Tuesday 12 th June, Thursday 14 th June, Friday 15 th June	8B Monday 11 th June, Wednesday 13 th June, Thursday 14 th June, Friday 15 th June	Students will need to complete their exams over 2 hours. The focus will be listening, reading and writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • French and Spanish will have 30 minutes reading, 30 minutes writing and then 30-40 minutes writing • French- TV, books, media and technology, giving opinions about media and technology, talking about a trip to Paris, tourist information, how to use the present, past and near future tenses,

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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> personalities and relationships, opinions about music, clothes and fashion, where you live and your home, furniture, food and drink, talking about events and celebrations, use of the partitive article (some) Spanish – basics i.e. names, ages, birthdays and key introductory phrases, discussing personality, pets, siblings, numbers up to 50 and the alphabet, hobbies and free-time, sports and leisure, giving opinions and reasons, school subjects and opinions, describing your school, what you do at break time and what you eat, describing people i.e. appearance and personality, where you live, events in Spain
Music	<p>8A1 – Tuesday 12th June period 1</p> <p>8A2 – Monday 11th June period 1</p> <p>8A3 – Fri 15th June period 1</p>	<p>8B1 – Friday 15th June period 4</p> <p>8B2 – Thursday 14th June period 4</p> <p>8B3 – Tuesday 12th June period 3</p>	45 minute listening paper, based on the pieces analysed this year.	<p>Muse – ‘Feeling Good’</p> <p>Shore – ‘Concerning Hobbits’ from Lord of the Rings</p> <p>Blues Brothers – ‘Sweet Home Chicago’</p> <p>Music history covered in homework tasks</p> <p>Revision resources will be on Show My Homework</p>
PE	Week beginning 11 th June: set online to be taken within the week, not in lesson time	Week beginning 11 th June: set online to be taken within the week, not in lesson time	Online (Show My Homework) short answer / multi-choice questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Components of fitness and when they are used – eg; speed, stamina Basic anatomy – eg; major muscles and bones responsible for movement Why we warm-up Energy sources (from food) for activity Thresholds of exercise Benefits of exercise over time
Religious Studies	Friday 8 th June	8B1 and 8B2 Thursday 7 th June 8B3 Wednesday 6 th June	One evaluation question asking students to consider the for and against of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The importance of rites of passage for different faiths Buddhist attitudes towards happiness

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			a statement and reach a justified conclusion	
Science – Biology, Chemistry and Physics	Thursday 14 th June – Lesson 4	Thursday 14 th June – Lesson 3	One-hour exam – Short structured questions and some longer questions requiring more detailed responses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reproduction • Health & lifestyle • Adaptation & inheritance • Acids & alkalis • Separation techniques • The periodic table • The Earth • Space • Motion & pressure • Energy
Technology	8A Red, Orange, Yellow, Green groups Wednesday 13 th June period 1 and base test on Wednesday 20 th June period 1	8B Blue, Indigo, Violet, White groups - Friday 15 th June period 1 and base test on Friday 22 nd June period 1	One hour exam – writing answers on the paper. One hour base test – multiple choice questions.	<p>Engineering – workshop tools, circuit boards, electronic components, working drawings.</p> <p>Product Design – workshop tools, workshop machinery, glues, working in mdf, joints, surface finishes.</p> <p>Food Technology – bread products, lunch boxes, case study involving diet, lifestyle and nutritional information.</p> <p>Graphic Design – symbols, signage, packaging.</p> <p>Designing a product – design specifications, target market, design analysis.</p>

Students will be completing end of year assessments over a period of lessons in computing.

Year 8 English end of year assessments – revision topics

Term	Explanation	Example
Alliteration	The repetition of a sound at the beginning of words that are next, or close, to one another. This can stress certain words and changes the rhythm of the sentence.	His soul swooned slowly. He was her father figure.
Atmosphere	A feeling that readers get from a narrative based on details such as settings, backgrounds, objects, etc.	fearful excited tense
Context	The circumstances or background in which something happens.	If a book is set in 1945 then World War II is occurring which will affect the plot.
Metaphor	An image that is created by referring to something as something else. The author uses it to give the reader additional information to create a particular effect or to emphasise a point.	The army of ants was on a rampage. (The ants are being described as an army showing how many there are and that they are organized.)
Onomatopoeia	A word that sounds like what it describes. It is used to appeal to the senses of the reader – often their sense of sound.	splash boom whack crash
Pathetic Fallacy	When the surroundings (e.g. the weather) reflect the mood of the character. Authors use this to create mood in their writing.	Rain began to pour outside as a single tear rolled down Emily’s cheek.
Personification	Making an object sound like a person by giving it human qualities. Personification is used to enable the reader to identify with what is being personified and helps to create a specific image.	The <i>fingers</i> of the tree grabbed my hair as I walked past. The flowers <i>danced</i> in the gentle breeze.
Rhyme	When the sound patterns of two words are the same – these sound patterns can be regular or irregular. The rhyme can adjust the tone of a poem or emphasise a point as with newspaper headlines.	I do not like green eggs and <i>ham</i> I do not like them, <i>Sam I am</i> . Time for the Red Sox to put <i>Dice</i> on <i>Ice!</i>
Rhythm	The beat of the writing when it is read aloud: fast or slow, regular or irregular. The rhythm of writing (poetry) can add to the overall effect of the piece.	“This is the night train, crossing the border” (The words create the rhythm of the train on its tracks.) .
Simile	A comparison of one thing to another using the words ‘like’ or ‘as’. Similes provide the reader with additional information as well as to create a particular effect or to emphasise a point.	The man was as cold as ice. The pain was like a searing heat passing through her.
Symbol	A thing which is intended to represent or stand for something else.	Dumbo’s ‘magic’ feather which stands for courage and self-confidence.
Repetition	When something is said, or written, more than once. This can be	I’m nobody! Who are you? Are you nobody too?

Year 8 English end of year assessments – revision topics

	consecutively or throughout a piece of writing. It is used to reinforce a point.	
Syllable	A syllable sounds like a beat in a word. They usually consist of one vowel and possibly one or more consonants.	Cat (1 syllable) Fairy (2 syllables) Hippopotamus 5 (syllables)
Synonym	This is when two different words have the same or similar meanings. (The opposite to antonym)	good – decent bad – awful nice – pleasant
Tone	This refers to the overall attitude of the writing and it is used to allow the emotions of the writer (or the character writing) to be expressed.	For example: formal / informal playful angry suspicious
Noun	Common nouns are the names of things, for example, people, places or objects.	horse school teapot
Common noun	A common noun describes a class of objects and does not have a capital letter.	car animal planet
Proper noun	A proper noun is the name of a particular person, place or thing, and always begins with a capital letter.	Edward Middleton Cheney Monday
Pronoun	A pronoun is a word that takes the place of nouns.	he, she, it; his hers; them, their
Verb	A word used to describe an action or state.	run, laugh, be
Adjective	An adjective is a word that describes a noun (the name of a thing or a place).	tall, terrible, beautiful, loud
Adverb	A word that describes a verb or adjective.	quickly, quietly, very
Determiner	A determiner is a word that goes before a noun and identifies the noun in further detail.	a, the, this, one, three, my, her, his, their, some, every
Preposition	Prepositions are linking words in a sentence. We use prepositions to explain where things are in time or space.	after, beside, down, over, with, through
Conjunction	A conjunction is a word that joins two sentences or clauses.	and, although, whenever, because
Simple sentence	A sentence consisting of only one clause.	I love English lessons.
Compound sentence	A compound sentence is formed when you join two main clauses with a connective.	I love English lessons and I like PE lessons.
Complex sentence	A complex sentence has a subordinate clause which relies on the main clause to make sense.	I first saw her in Paris, where I lived as a small child. I first saw her in Paris (main clause), where I lived as a small child (subordinate clause).

Year 8 maths end of year assessments – revision topics

Year 8 set 3 – Test A (Non-calculator)	Year 8 set 3 – Test B (Calculator)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative numbers • Properties of 3d shapes • Converting measures • Ratio • Dual bar charts • Simplifying expressions • Solving simple equations • Substituting into a formula • Adding and subtracting decimals • Multiplying decimals • Rounding to decimal places • Angles around a point/on a line • Indices, squares and roots • Prime factors • Sequences • Percentages • Fractions (adding and subtracting) • Probability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratio • Money • Volume • Nets • Surface area • Grouped frequency (modal class) • Interpreting pie charts • Compound bar charts • Function machines • Expanding brackets • Simplifying expressions • Ordering decimals • Solving equations • Using a calculator • Rounding to decimals places • Powers • Fractions • Constructing triangles ASA • HCF (venn diagram) • Sequences • Fractions, decimals and percentages • Probability
Year 8 set 2 – Test A (Non-calculator)	Year 8 set 2 – Test B (Calculator)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative numbers • Highest common factor • Prime factors • Roots and squares • Solving equations • Expanding brackets • Factorising • Angles • Multiplying and dividing fractions • Percentages • Straight line graphs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area • Surface area • Nets • Pie charts • Distance-time graphs • Speed/ distance/time • Ratio • Alternate and corresponding angles • Percentages
Year 8 set 1 – Test A (non-calculator)	Year 8 set 1 – Test B (Calculator)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prime factors • HCF/ LCM • Rounding to significant figures • Estimating • Expanding brackets • Identities • Powers • Substituting into a formula • Solving equations • Transformations • Percentage change • Constructions • Ratio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circumference of a circle • Pythagoras • Volume • Distance-time graphs • Speed/distance/ time • Compound interest • Ratio • Probability • Bearings • Similar shapes • Equation of parallel lines • Straight line graphs • Equations of perpendicular lines