



# The Polesworth School

Ensuring Excellence

## GCSE and Level 2 exams - How to support your child.

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# How we learn?

**Retrieval practice + Spaced practice =  
Long term memory**

Long-lasting memory requires 4-5 correct retrievals or recalls

The Ebbinghaus forgetting curve on the right shows how information is lost over time when there is no attempt to retrieve it.

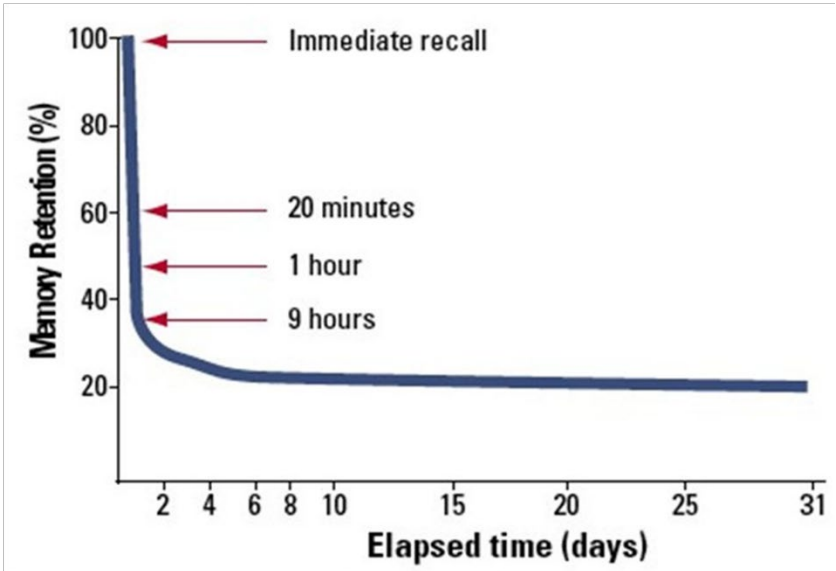


Image reference: securityawarenessapp.com

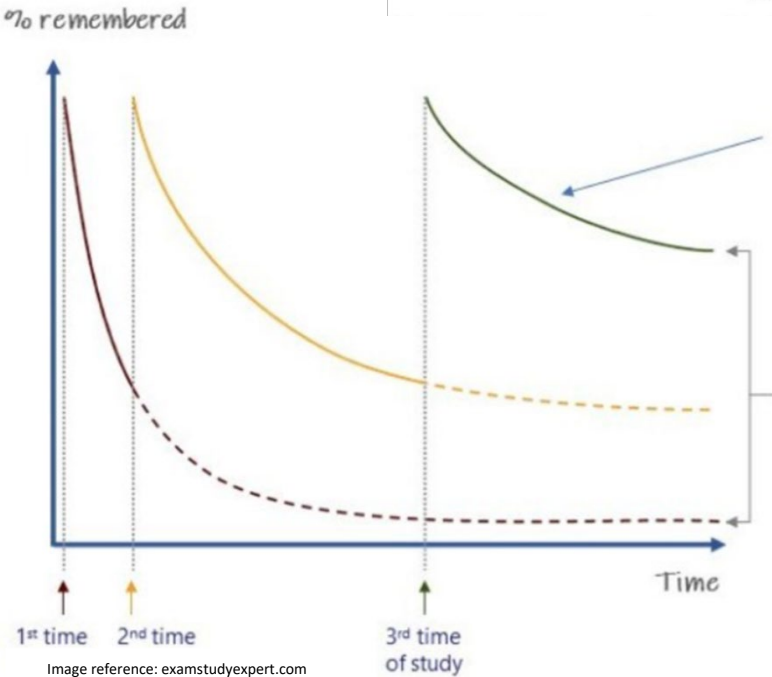


Image reference: examstudyspecialist.com

Look at how much more slowly you forget after revisiting a couple of times!

Look at how much more you can remember after revisiting the material a few times versus only studying it once!

# What helps us learn?

If you're determined to do well, you need to understand what helps us learn. Nothing beats hard work, especially when it comes to studying, but there are ways you can guide your brain to recall information more easily, which supports your ability to learn.

## Believe in yourself

Recognise your own potential and aim to meet or exceed this. Don't compare yourself to others. All that matters is that you do the best that you can do. Don't let negative thoughts take over. Just because you have the thought does not mean that it is true or that you must believe it.

## Use Mind Maps to connect ideas

If you find it difficult to remember lots of study notes, Mind Maps may be the key to improving your memory. A Mind Map making tool can be found on the Get revising website: <https://getrevising.co.uk/> along with Flash Card and Revision Card making tools.

## Practice, Practice, Practice

Mix up your study habits and methods by trying some of these: listening to podcasts; watching videos or documentaries; writing quizzes; moving to a different study area; or even something as simple as using different colours for your study notes.

## Adapt for different subjects

It may seem obvious, but many students try to study for different subjects using the same study methods. **Your learning should take account of the difference between your subjects** and the challenges they represent.

For example, flashcards are ideal for learning in languages and Science where you need to remember key definitions. However, <https://hegartymaths.com>

is a great way to test your GCSE Maths skills. Once you understand that different subjects need to be approached in different ways, there is no stopping you!



Image reference: [www.medium.com](http://www.medium.com)

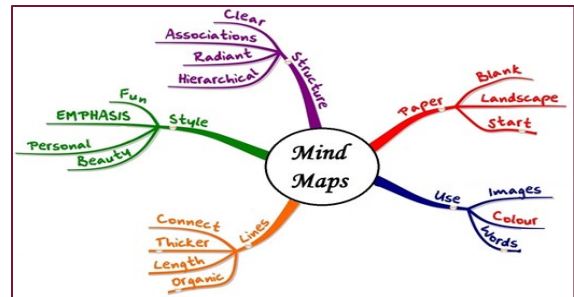


Image reference: [www.lifehack.org](http://www.lifehack.org)

Image reference: [www.thereadingadvicehub.com](http://www.thereadingadvicehub.com)



# Helping you deal with exam stress

Tests and exams can be a challenging part of school life for children and young people. But there are ways to ease the stress.

## Watch for signs of stress

If you are stressed, you may:

- worry a lot
- feel tense
- have headaches and stomach pains
- not sleep well
- be irritable
- lose interest in food or eat more than normal
- not enjoy activities they previously enjoyed
- be negative and have a low mood
- feel hopeless about the future



Having someone to talk to about your work can help. Support from a parent, tutor or study buddy can help you share your worries and keep things in perspective.

You can always talk to a member of school staff who you feel is supportive.

## Make sure you eat well

A balanced diet is vital for your health and can help you feel well during exam periods.

You might find high-fat, high-sugar and high-caffeine foods and drinks, such as energy drinks, cola, sweets, chocolate, burgers and chips, make you hyperactive, irritable and moody.

Where possible, get involved in shopping for food and choose some healthy snacks.

## Get enough sleep

Good sleep improves thinking and concentration. Most teenagers need 8 to 10 hours' sleep a night.

Allow half an hour or so to wind down between studying, watching TV or using a computer and going to bed, to help get a good night's sleep.

Cramming all night before an exam is usually a bad idea. Sleep will benefit you far more than a few hours of panicky last-minute study.



Image reference: [www.vox.com](http://www.vox.com)

## Get help with study

Make sure you have somewhere comfortable to study. Ask your parents/carers for support with your revision.

They may have some good practical ideas that will help you revise, such as drawing up a revision schedule or getting hold of past papers for practice.

### Talk about exam nerves



Image reference: [www.telegraph.co.uk](http://www.telegraph.co.uk)

Remember that it's normal to feel anxious. Nervousness is a natural reaction to exams. The key is to put these nerves to positive use. If anxiety is getting in the way rather than helping, practise the activities you'll be doing on the day of the exam. This will help it feel less scary. For example, this may involve doing practice papers under exam conditions or seeing the exam hall beforehand. School staff should be able to help with this. Get help facing your fears and see

these activities through, rather than avoiding them. Think about what you know and the time you have already put into studying to feel more confident.

### Exercise during exams

Exercise can help boost energy levels, clear the mind, and relieve stress. It does not matter what it is – walking, cycling, swimming, football, and dancing are all effective.

Activities that involve other people can be particularly helpful.



Image reference: [www.sportsinjuryclinic.net](http://www.sportsinjuryclinic.net)

### When to get help

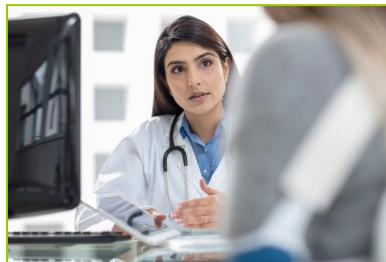


Image reference: [www.mirror.co.uk](http://www.mirror.co.uk)

Some young people feel much better when exams are over, but that's not the case for all young people.

Get help if your anxiety or low mood is severe, persists and interferes with their everyday life. Seeing a GP is a good place to start.

Remember our Student Support Managers are always here to help should you need any further guidance. You can email them at any time for confidential support and advice.

Pastoral support email: [help@thepolesworthschool.com](mailto:help@thepolesworthschool.com)

Health advice email: [www.nhs.co.uk](http://www.nhs.co.uk)



# Inclusion Department

At Polesworth we appreciate that some of our students may find assessments and exams really challenging, both academically and emotionally. It is the role of the Inclusion department to ensure that our students with additional needs have those needs met when it comes to taking their exams or completing assessments.

The Inclusion department is a large team that works across the whole school. We have several very experienced members of staff who are trained in how to get the best out of our students. They are also highly skilled at building relationships, nurturing, and mentoring.

If you think that your child needs some extra support for their exams it is important that we know about this as soon as possible so that we can put things in place and so that your child can familiarize themselves with what could end up being a new way of working. The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) specifies that for a student to have extra-time or a scribe in exams they must meet certain criteria and they also must complete a standardized assessment completed by a trained assessor. They also require school to provide evidence that endorses the need for extra support. For example, if using a laptop is their normal way of working, we would need to show proof that this is how they work normally and not just something that we have requested for their exams.

If you would like to discuss things further or need to raise any concerns, please get in touch with the Inclusion department by phone or email.

SEN support email: [inclusionstaff@thepolesworthschool.com](mailto:inclusionstaff@thepolesworthschool.com)

SENCO email: [p.rosten@thepolesworthschool.com](mailto:p.rosten@thepolesworthschool.com)