



RAINFORD HIGH

PART OF RAINFORD ACADEMIES TRUST

13th December 2019

Dear Parents/Carers,

As you will be aware, the Year 11 mock examinations are imminent. Your child will sit their written papers from Monday 13th January – Friday 25th January and their practical examinations the following week, Monday 27th January – Friday 31st January. All curriculum areas will be covered during this period and should give you and your child a clear indication of how they are progressing in each of their subjects.

The mock examination process has been shared with students in assembly this week and they have received their individual timetable in form today. For your reference, a copy of this presentation and the mock timetable is available on the Year 11 tab of the school website - <http://rainford.org.uk/year-11-2/>

To support your child through this important process, we will be sharing revision strategies in form, as well as weekly revisions tips in assembly. So that you can help your child revise at home, we will share these weekly tips with you via text / email. To further support your child with their studies, please refer to resources that were shared at the GCSE Success Evening and which are available on the Year 11 tab of the school website. Finally, you may find the enclosed article from the TES on a pupil's perspective on the GCSE exams and his top tips for success to be useful to read and discuss with your child.

To guide your child in their revision, teaching staff will be setting revision homework on Show My Homework so please support your child in completing this focussed revision. As previously communicated, teachers are also offering revision sessions. The timetable for these sessions are on the Year 11 tab of the school website. In the mock period, there will also be additional revision sessions in between examinations which will be shared with pupils and uploaded to the Year 11 tab.

Please encourage your child to approach this mock examination period as they would their public examinations next summer; they will use their results to hopefully determine their post-16 opportunities by using them to apply for colleges and apprenticeships. If you have any queries regarding the mock examinations, or your child's progress, please do not hesitate to contact me (s.wheelock@rainford.org.uk), Year 11 Learning Leader, Mrs. Cross (l.cross@rainford.org.uk) or Year 11 Pastoral Leader, Mr. Pendlebury (m.pendlebury@rainford.org.uk).

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your support during this crucial time in your child's education.

With best wishes for a happy Christmas and a successful new year,

S. Wheelock

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How I got straight 9s at GCSE – TES, 25 November 2019

One student whose GCSE results were among the best in the country shares some advice for those taking exams in 2020.

The long interlude between the GCSE exams and results day meant an invitation for feelings of angst and self-doubt. I was recounting my analyses of *Macbeth* quotes, reassuring myself by reworking exam

The relief when I got 10 grade 9s at GCSE – placing me in the top 426 students of 850,000 nationally – was overwhelming.

Top tips for GCSE success

Here's my advice to pass on to your students:

1. Make resources early

For each topic covered in class, I made sure to have my notes and flashcards prepared, so that once it came to exam season, I could concentrate on memorisation.

Find out which exam board you follow, and then the complete exam information (the specification) can be found online.

2. Revise for end-of-topic tests

End-of-topic tests, spot tests and mini-quizzes can seem dull, but they are incredibly important.

Just 15 to 20 minutes of learning a few key points for each of these quizzes can really build up over a year, and make the learning much more manageable.

3. Approach mocks properly

Mock exams are the biggest opportunity you'll get to test the waters before your real exams. Revising for these with a strict timetable (and sticking to it) will mean you're well-rehearsed by May.

4. Experiment with revision techniques

Flashcards with questions on one side and answers on the other are the most effective form of revision for some people, but others prefer mind-mapping, whereby key concepts are linked together around a topic title.

Find out what works for you, and try short revision sessions of 25 minutes with a five-minute break to let more information sink in.

5. Plan your time

I spent two to three weeks revising for mock exams and six to seven weeks revising for real exams, and found that to be sufficient, doing about two hours of work each night.

Divide a subject into each of its topics and make sure that you cover each of them before the exam. And be sure to take into account your extracurricular commitments; you may need to start studying earlier if your calendar is busy.

6. Explain the information

Talking about a topic to a family member or friend and being tested verbally can help with the recall of information and allow understanding of the links between topics.

7. Look at past papers

Around a month before the exams, begin to practice exam papers. Attempt them in exam-like conditions and correct them with a mark scheme. Then concentrate on your weakest areas.

This should be the final stage in the revision process, consolidating the information as you move into the last weeks before the exams.

What else do students need?

My GCSE preparation was a team sport – access to revision resources, having a quiet study space and good peer, school and home support all had a part to play.

I found that determined teachers were able to inspire me towards success, and supportive parents reinforced this work ethic (I recognise that I am privileged to attend an excellent school and receive academic support at home).

The message here is that students can only control some of these aspects, and therefore every improvement should be celebrated.

Whether it be outperforming predicted grades, making revision more effective or finally passing maths or English, these successes are valid and the main goal should be to maximise your true potential.

Robbie Hicks is a student in England

<https://www.tes.com/news/how-i-got-straight-9s-gcse>