

Organising and Planning your revision

Pre-planning

Good revision doesn't begin in the Spring of your second year of study; organising and planning your revision ideally begins as soon as you've done your very first topic. Throughout each chapter of this book, we have provided you with debates around the key topics we believe are important to know for each topic. At the end of each chapter, we have also provided a list of useful essay questions for you to consider.

One of the most time-efficient ways of keeping on top of the work you are doing at school is to prepare plans for all the key debates we have covered in this book for each topic. Rather than preparing detailed notes or writing out essays in full, plans help you to make notes in a way that is most effective for understanding the main debates in a topic. Also, by doing plans, instead of notes, you can get into the hang of pairing arguments, thinking about which examples would best be used and how to incorporate your judgement in your answer – all essential skills for exam success!

On our companion website, here, we have provided you with a number of different ways you can prepare these plans. Figure 12.1. is one example of these. As we said, this isn't, ideally, something you should leave to your last year, but something you should try to get into the habit of doing for every topic as you complete them in school with your teacher. We have designed the chapters of this book with this in mind, to try to make this process easier for you. By using this book alongside our planning sheets which you'll find online, you can get ahead with your revision and set yourself up well for a less stressful final year.

30-mark essay question planning sheet

30-mark Essay Question Planning Sheet		
Title:		
Introduction: Definition, if needed , context, view D - (if needed) C - V - ... <i>this essay will argue that</i>		
Section 1	P1	Proponents of this view argue that
	Critique	Despite this, the more compelling argument is...
Section 2	P2	Supporters of this view argue that
	Critique	However, this argument must be rejected as...
Section 3	P3	Advocates of this view argue that
	Critique	Despite this view, the stronger argument is...
Conclusion...		

Exam Monthly Planner

Exam Monthly Planner 2019

	March	April	May	June
1st	F	M 9 weeks	W	Sa
2nd	Sa	T	Th	Su
3rd	Su	W	F	M COMPONENT 1 PM
4th	M 13 weeks	Th	Sa	T
5th	T	F	Su	W
6th	W	Sa	M 4 weeks	Th COMPONENT 2 AM
7th	T	Su	T	F
8th	F	M 8 weeks	W	Sa
9th	Sa	T	Th	Su
10th	Su	W	F	M
11th	M 12 weeks	Th	Sa	T COMPONENT 3 AM
12th	T	F	Su	W
13th	W	Sa	M 3 weeks	Th
14th	Th	Su	T	F
15th	F	M 7 weeks	W	Sa
16th	Sa	T	Th	Su
17th	Su	W	F	<i>Democracy, Pressure Groups, Rights</i>
18th	M 11 weeks	Th	Sa	<i>Parties, Elections</i>
19th	T	F	Su	<i>Referendum, Voting Behaviour & Media</i>
20th	W	Sa	M 2 weeks	
21st	Th	Su	T	<i>Constitution, Parliament, PM & Executive</i>
22nd	F	M 6 weeks	W	<i>Supreme Court, EU, Sovereignty</i>
23rd	Sa	T	Th	
24th	Su	W	F	<i>Liberalism, Socialism, Conservatism</i>
25th	M 10 weeks	T	Sa	<i>Feminism</i>
26th	T	F	Su	
27th	W	Sa	M 1 week	<i>Constitution, Congress, President</i>
28th	Th	Su	T	<i>Supreme Court, Rights, Elections</i>
29th	F	M 5 weeks	W	<i>Parties, Pressure Groups</i>
30th	Sa	T	Th	
31st	Su		F	

The real revision

In the run up to your real exams, the spring of your Year Thirteen, you need to really start to think about your proper revision. At this stage you may well have had mock exams at the end of Year 12 (hopefully all those plans you've been doing since Year 12 will have helped!) and then you probably had mocks some time in the spring Term of Year 13. Once recovered from these, by later in that Spring term, you need to start to think about organising your real revision.

Many students put off revising because they don't know where to start or what to do. The best place to start is to plot the topics you need to study, week by week on a planner (see Figure 12.2). (You will also find a version of this to download on our website).

So, if you start at the beginning of March you will have around 12 weeks to organise your topics. This will mean you'll need to double up on the topics you look at each week as there are eight UK topics, four ideas to study and six topics on either Global or US, a total of eighteen. When doubling up, think about combining a big topic with a smaller one or a topic you feel confident on with one you feel less so. The aim is that by the end of each week, you have gone over all your plans, improved and updated them, refreshed and committed them to memory.

On exam day

Preparing to answer the source

On both UK papers, you will have the option of two source questions to choose from. You don't have time to read through both sources before choosing, so in reality, you should make your choice based on the question.

As we've discussed previously, source answers should be structured in exactly the same way as essays. The only difference is where your points come from. In theory, you have 45 minutes to answer a source question, but in reality, you will have less than this. Below are some suggestions for how to prepare your answer.

1. It's essential to read the source thoroughly, your answer must be based on it. Read it through once first.
2. When you read through it a second time use two different coloured highlighters to highlight the **arguments in favour** in one colour and the **arguments against** in another colour.
3. Make a simple grid plan (see below). Write down very briefly – one or two words is fine – the arguments for each side as outlined in the source. These, and only these, will form the basis of your answer (if you are really struggling with time you could miss this step out).
4. Pair up the arguments and counterarguments as much as possible
5. Use these points as outlined throughout this chapter (although you do not have to use them all, just use the ones you feel are the most important and you are most confident writing about).

FOR	AGAINST
1.	a.
2.	b.
3.	c.
4.	d.

Preparing to answer the essay

Like source questions, on both UK papers, you will have the option of two essay questions to choose from. It's important to select the question that you feel most confident in answering. A little bit of time spent here is important. Realising you've made the wrong choice halfway through writing or when you've finished is very frustrating. This can be avoided by spending a few minutes working out what the question is asking of you and how you would answer it.

Once you've selected the essay question you need to spend some time planning what you're going to write. Some find it helpful to underline or highlight the key words in the question to remind them to focus on it. It is important to emphasise that this is not a waste of your time, it's the most important step! Like the source, write yourself up a little grid like the one above and try to structure and organise your thoughts.

Exams are stressful and you are often in a total panic when you turn over the exam paper. It is essential to "centre" yourself before you start writing. The process of selecting, reading, choosing and planning all help to calm you down and get you to focus on the important stuff. By the time you've gone through the process above for the source or essay, you will hopefully have forgotten your nerves and be ready to start writing!