

College exams differ from high school tests in that they **cover more content and occur less frequently**, which requires a different approach to studying. Many students are surprised by lower grades because they rely on passive strategies like rereading. To succeed, students need to **engage actively with the material, invest more time, use effective study techniques, and monitor their understanding.**

1. What is effective revision?

Strategy	Active Revision (Effective)	Passive Revision (Less Effective)
Understanding the exam	Learn about exam format, topics, question types, and ask questions to instructors	Ignore exam format and study without clear direction
Time Management	Creating a structured study plan and following it consistently	No plan, studying randomly or only before the exam
Spaced Repetition	Reviewing material at intervals, revisiting difficult topics regularly	Studying once (cramming) and not revisiting the material
Organizing material	Divide material into chunks and study by topic	Try to study everything at once without structure
Active Learning	Summarizing, paraphrasing, making flashcards, teaching others	Just rereading notes or textbooks without thinking
Self-Testing & Practice	Doing practice exams, answering questions from memory, checking mistakes	Looking at answers without trying, recognizing instead of recalling
Monitoring learning	Check what you know and adjust strategies if needed	Do not evaluate learning or identify weaknesses
Prioritisation	Focusing on important topics and weak areas	Studying everything equally or focusing only on easy topics
Learning Styles	Choosing strategies that match how you learn (e.g., mind maps, discussion, practice)	Using one method only (e.g., just reading) regardless of effectiveness
Breaks and Rest	Taking planned breaks to maintain focus and productivity	Studying for long hours without breaks (leading to fatigue)
Long-term memory	Focus on storing and retrieving information from memory	Focus on recognition only (seeing familiar content)

1.1. What Are Active Preparation Strategies?

Active preparation strategies are **deliberate study techniques** that require learners to actively engage with information in order to understand and retain it. They should be selected based the **type of exam** (e.g., essay, problem-solving, objective), the **nature of the material**, and the learner’s **preferred study approach**.

1.1.1 What’s the role of Active Preparation Strategies? (ICOW Model)

They are strategies most effective during the **initial stage of studying** a topic. Active preparation strategies serve four main functions: **identify, condense, organize, and write (ICOW)**. **These strategies make you** distinguish between known and unknown information, reduce large amounts of content into key ideas, structure information logically, and transform information into one’s own words. These strategies are particularly effective for **visual and kinesthetic learners** (writing-based tasks), yet they can be adapted for **auditory learners** through **oral repetition or recitation**.

1.1.2. Why Are They Effective?

Active preparation strategies enhance learning because they promote **deep processing** of information. They encourage **rehearsal and repetition**. They also support **elaboration** (making meaning through personal reformulation). Besides, they facilitate **self-monitoring of understanding**. Active preparation strategies work because they enable you to make information **more meaningful**, improve memory retention, and present content in a **clear and manageable format**.

1.1.3. Importance of Using Multiple Strategies

Using a variety of strategies is essential because different types of content require different approaches. Furthermore, multiple methods create **stronger memory connections**. Using a variety of strategies to prepare for the exams ensures you are using the best strategy for you, for the material, and for the exam.

1.1.4. What is your learning style?

Understanding your learning style enables you to choose revision techniques that match your natural inclinations, maximising your comprehension and retention.

Learning Style	Description	Preferred Methods
Visual	Learns best through seeing and visual representation of information	Diagrams, charts, graphs, images, organized notes
Auditory	Learns best through listening and speaking	Lectures, discussions, explanations, listening activities
Reading/Writing	Learns best through written language	Textbooks, articles, note-taking, summarizing
Kinesthetic	Learns best through physical activity and experience	Hands-on tasks, practice, movement, real-life activities

a. What are the adequate revision strategies for visual learners?

Element	Description	Purpose
Central Theme	Main topic placed at the center	Focuses revision on one key subject
Branches & Subtopics	Main ideas extend from the center into branches	Organizes information clearly
Color & Visuals	Use colours, images, symbols, icons	Makes learning engaging and memorable
Keywords & Summaries	Use short words/phrases instead of long sentences	Condenses information for easy recall
Connections	Link related ideas with lines/arrows	Shows relationships between concepts
Review & Revisit	Regularly go over the mind map	Reinforces memory and understanding
Multiple Mind Maps	Create separate maps for different topics	Avoids overload and improves focus

b. What are the adequate revision strategies for auditory learners?

Strategy	Description	Purpose
Recorded summaries	Create and listen to audio recordings of key concepts	Reinforce learning through listening and repetition
Verbal repetition	Re-listen to materials multiple times	Improve memory retention
Explain out loud	Verbally explain concepts in own words	Deepen understanding and identify gaps
Study groups/discussions	Engage in discussions and verbal exchanges	Enhance learning through interaction
Podcasts/audio resources	Use educational audio materials	Gain alternative explanations and insights

Rhymes & mnemonics	Create verbal memory aids	Simplify and remember complex information
Oral quizzes	Practice speaking answers aloud	Strengthen recall and active learning
Background music	Study with non-distracting sound	Improve focus (for some learners)

c. What are the adequate revision strategies for Reading/Writing learners?

Strategy	Description	Purpose
Detailed note-taking	Write structured notes in own words	Organize and process information effectively
Highlighting & annotations	Mark key ideas in texts	Identify and retain important information
Color coding	Use colors for categories/themes	Aid memory through visual organization
Written summaries	Write condensed versions of content	Reinforce understanding and revision
Flashcards	Use cue cards for self-testing	Enhance recall through active practice
Rewriting notes	Rewrite or copy notes	Strengthen memory through repetition
Practice essays	Write responses to exam questions	Develop writing skills and exam readiness

d. What are the adequate revision strategies for Kinesthetic learners?

Strategy	Description	Purpose
Role-play & simulation	Act out concepts or scenarios	Understand through real-life application
Study games	Use movement-based learning activities	Make revision engaging and interactive
Teach others	Demonstrate or explain physically	Reinforce understanding through action
Flashcards (hands-on)	Physically handle and review cards	Improve memory via tactile engagement
Mindful movement	Associate gestures with concepts	Strengthen memory connections

1.2. What Are Active Review Strategies?

Active review strategies are **techniques used to practise and reinforce previously prepared material** in order to improve retention and recall. They must **align with preparation strategies if for instance, you make self-tests as a preparation strategy, you have to take self-tests as a review strategy**. Preparation strategies have also to be selected based on the **type of exam and material**.

1.2.1. What's the role of Review Strategies? (RE-USE Model)

The review strategies are used after preparation, during repeated study sessions. They serve five key functions; rehearse, extend, use, self-test, and evaluate. They help you to repeat information regularly, and deepen understanding. They enable you to actively apply knowledge, to check recall and accuracy and monitor learning progress. Active review strategies work well for auditory learners (based on reciting and retrieval), while both kinesthetic and visual learners are still checking answers on paper and manipulating materials while reviewing.

1.2.3. Why Are They Effective?

Active review strategies enhance learning because they promote **frequent repetition** of material, strengthen **long-term memory retention**, improve **retrieval ability** (recalling information during exams), support **continuous self-assessment, and monitor progress**. Furthermore, the review strategies keep information **fresh and accessible**, help you monitor **the effectiveness of your strategies**, and increase familiarity with **exam-type questions**

1.2.4 Importance of Variety

Using multiple review strategies is essential because each preparation method requires a matching review technique. The different approaches create multiple memory cues and enhance flexibility in recall during exams.

1.3. Create Study Sheets

1.3.1. What Are Study Sheets?

A study sheet is a preparation strategy, It consists of a **one-page summary of all essential information on a single topic**.

Key characteristics:

- One topic per page
- Focus on **integration**, not isolated facts
- Combines information from **textbooks and lecture notes**
- Typically **3–7 sheets per chapter**

1.3.2. How to Create Study Sheets?

Steps: (See Figure 1.1)

- a. Identify **major topics** from lectures/texts
- b. Use **one page per topic**
- c. Write the **topic title at the top**
- d. Organize content using:
 - Headings & subheadings
 - Key details in concise phrases
 - Formats: outline, chart, or concept map
- e. Include:
 - Known information
 - Information still to be learned
- f. Add in margins:
 - **Questions** (for self-testing)
 - **Definitions** (for key terms)

1.3.3. Why Study Sheets Are Effective?

Study sheets work because they:

- Apply active preparation (identify, condense, organize, write)
- Break content into **manageable units**
- Promote **deep understanding** of one topic through integration of notes
- Encourage learning in **your own words**
- Provide **structured frameworks** for recall

They also:

- Support all exam types (MCQ, essay, short answer, etc.)
- Create **multiple memory cues** (topic → headings → details)
- Build a **complete revision system** for the course

1.3.4. How to Use Study Sheets

- **Recite content** using headings as cues
- **Reproduce sheets from memory** (blank page method)
- Practise:
 - Whole-topic understanding (integrated learning)
 - Specific details (via margin questions/definitions)
- Use regularly in **daily review sessions**

Figure 1.1 Sample Study Sheet (Creative)

MARGIN: QUESTIONS ?

Write questions here to test yourself!

- Why should you read before taking notes?
- When should you take notes for difficult vs easy texts?
- What is the difference between outline and modified-block notes?
- Why should you use your own words?
- How do recall questions improve learning?
- Can I explain this process without looking at my notes?

HOW TO TAKE WRITTEN NOTES

★ Good notes today = Better understanding tomorrow!

1 BEFORE TAKING NOTES

- Read the material first.
- **Highlight** important ideas.
- Get a **general understanding** before writing.
- Adjust strategy based on difficulty:
 - Difficult text → take notes after each paragraph/section.
 - Easier text → take notes after full reading (review stage).

2 ORGANIZING THE MATERIAL

- Create your own structure if needed:
 - ✓ Add headings & subheadings.
 - ✓ Move details under the correct categories.
- Focus on big picture → then details.
- Aim to **restructure**, not copy.

3 FORMATS FOR WRITTEN NOTES

A OUTLINE FORMAT

- Hierarchical structure (top → down)
- Includes headings, subheadings, and supporting details.
- Types:
 - Formal (Roman numerals, letters, numbers)
 - Informal (indentation only)
- Helps with logical organization.

B MODIFIED-BLOCK FORMAT

- Write headings + related details.
- Add your own subheadings.
- More flexible and easier to use.
- Improves clarity and organization.

4 WRITING EFFECTIVE NOTES

- Use **your own words** (except key terms).
- Write concise, meaningful phrases.
- Avoid copying full sentences.
- Make notes easy to review later.

5 ADDING RECALL QUESTIONS ?

- Write questions in the margin.
- Place each question next to its answer.
- **Highlight** or underline answers.
- Use numbering or colors for clarity.
- **Practice:** Cover notes and recite answers aloud.

6 WHAT I KNOW / WHAT I NEED TO LEARN

✓ I KNOW	❓ I NEED TO LEARN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____

THE PROCESS (SUMMARY)

→
 →
 →
 →
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Read Highlight Organize Write Notes Add Questions Review & Recite

★ Consistent practice leads to better understanding and higher scores!

STUDY TIP: Take notes actively. Ask questions. Review often. You've got this! ❤️

KEY TERMS 📖

- **Written Notes:** Organized record of information from reading material.
- **Outline Format:** Hierarchical structure with headings, subheadings, and details.
- **Modified-Block Notes:** Notes with headings and related details in a flexible structure.
- **Recall Questions:** Questions written in the margin for self-testing.
- **Subheadings:** Additional categories used to better organize information.

★ Use this margin for self-testing! ⤴