‘Active’ Revision Methods

35 ways to work smarter, not harder
‘Active’ Revision Methods

Foldable: Mini-Book

What?
Single A4 page that can quickly make a simple mini-book with 8 ‘pages’

How Use?
Handy format for summarising notes into key points.

Can then be used as quick way to review a topic.

Could build-up a collection of mini-books on key topics.
‘Active’ Revision Methods

Foldable: Fold-Out Strip

What?
Single A4 page that’s a dead quick way to summarise facts or themes for a topic

How Use?
Make you think by having to organise & structure learning
Use headings and colours to make information stand out
Could put four per page in your book to cover a topic
‘Active’ Revision Methods

Foldable: Flipper

What?
Single A4 page that can be folded to make a ‘flipper’ to stick in an exercise book.

How Use?
Quick way to self-test on a topic.
Can write key terms, with definitions underneath.
Or can use with questions & answers underneath.
Foldable: Cross Flipper

What?
Another kind of ‘flipper’ that’s also good when you want to hide more text to test recall

How Use?
Write a ‘clue’ on the ‘outside’ of each flap & text inside
Later, test if you can use the clue to recall all the facts
You can stick several on a page to pack in lots of terms
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Foldable: Diamond

What?
Single A3 page that can be folded to make a ‘diamond’ with fold-out ‘flaps’

How Use?
Creative and memorable way to outline key points in topic.
Forces you to think when ‘reducing’ notes
Can then stick in your book to keep things visually stimulating
Notes: **Wheel**

**What?**
Single A4 page that can be used to create summary of related concepts in a topic.

**How Use?**
Flexible way to divide-up a topic to clarify key ideas.

Can use colours to make sections more distinct.

‘Wheel’ can be split into any number of sections.
Notes: Pyramid

What?
Single A4 page that can be used to show how ideas fit together like a ‘stack’

How Use?
Doing this forces you to think about the links between ideas
Is flexible so you can divide up any way you like
Use colours or even drawings to help sections stand out
‘Active’ Revision Methods

Notes: Revision Grid

What?
Single A4 page that can be used to present ‘chunks’ to give a ‘cheat sheet’ on a topic

How Use?
Split grid into boxes using whatever layout suits a topic.

Then fill each boxes with text or a sketch, for example.

Sum-up a topic in a way you can later review ‘at a glance’
Notes: **Bite-Size**

**What?**
Single A4 page that can be used to reduce a topic into bite-sized pieces.

**How Use?**
Use shapes to help you organise aspects of a topic.
Perhaps use a shape as a ‘theme’ to help jog memory.
Can also use colours on lines & shapes so more memorable.
Notes: Hex Links

What?
Cut out the hexagons from the printable sheet & use them to show themes in a topic area.

How Use?
Put a key word on each hex or a summary of a key idea.

You can then arrange the hex shapes in many flexible ways.

Move them around to show how ideas fit in a sequence.
Notes: **Timeline**

**What?**
Single A4 page that can be used to draw a timeline for an event or a process.

**How Use?**
Put dates in small boxes and annotate with key points.

Use to help reduce a complex period to main events.

Could later cover big boxes to test your recall of events.
‘Active’ Revision Methods

Notes: Sequence

What?
Single A4 page for when you need to learn a sequence, such as parts of a process

How Use?
Forces you to think clearly about each stage

Break the process into boxes and summarise with notes

Use colours and headings to structure key points
Recall: **Timed Write**

**What?**
Test your recall of a topic by challenging yourself to do a ‘one minute’ write.

**How Use?**
Set a timer for 60s and write everything you know.

It will help you by showing where you have gaps in your knowledge.

After that, you could extend the topic & try a 5 minute write.
Notes: **Spoken Words**

**What?**
Record your notes on a topic by speaking into your phone, or ask a friend or family member.

**How Use?**
Listening works better than reading for some people.

First, write a ‘script’ so all key points go in the recording.

Then you can listen anywhere – boring car trips, even on the bus!
Recall: **Tell The Troll**

**What?**
Test your recall of a topic by explaining it to another person – or to your ‘pet’ troll!

**How Use?**
Experts say that ‘if you can’t speak it, you can’t write it’

So explaining a topic to someone can help clarify your thinking.

You need a good ‘listener’, though – like a friend, relative or a ‘toy’!
Recall: Walk & Talk

What?
When stuck in a revision rut, a ‘study walk’ can break the boredom & stimulate your brain.

How Use?
Speaking, rather than writing, works better for some people.
So pick a topic & explain it or ‘teach it’ to your walk buddy.
You could even do it when your the dog but maybe not too loud!
Recall: Walkabout

**What?**
Use your room as a way to link actions with ideas to help you remember better.

**How Use?**
Write key terms on A4 sheets, or post-its & place round room.

Jump, walk or dance (!) between the words and say each out loud.

Movement can help ideas ‘stick’ & it becomes a ‘hook’ for recall later.
Recall: **Body Pegs**

**What?**
A way to remember key terms by linking them to parts of your body as ‘memory hooks’

**How Use?**
First, learn this set of ‘body pegs’ with memorable actions, like heading a goal for 5.

Next, you ‘attach’ a key word to each one in your mind.

Later, go round the loop using actions to help recall the words
Recall: **Roman Rooms**

**What?**
A classic technique that uses a ‘route’ round a room as memory ‘hooks’ to recall terms.

**How Use?**
Find 6 points in a room & stick post-its with words to learn.

Walk from point to point repeating the words until you can take each post-it away.

Later, in your mind, go round the room and recall the terms.
Notes: **Posters**

**What?**
Highly visual way to keep key ideas in your mind by keeping them in your sight!

**How Use?**
Use A4 or A5 and text that’s big & colourful, with drawings

Stick them around your room so you see them all the time

After a while, flip them over & test if you can recall the content
Notes: Poster Tour

What?
Keep your brain stimulated by getting someone to put posters/post-its in random places around your home.

How Use?
This helps recall as each place becomes a ‘memory hook’.
The element of ‘surprise’ can be what your brain recalls first.
That then ‘unlocks’ the words or images that link to a key topic.
Notes: Post-It Themes

What?
Use post-it notes to help you organise topics, such as using colours to show themes.

How Use?
Create a display where post-its draw attention to main points.
Put them in coloured clusters to show links between ideas.
Keep notes simple – and take care not to overload the display!
Notes: Noticeboard

What?
A noticeboard or whiteboard is a great way to keep post-its in sight & make them familiar.

How Use?
Buy one cheaply from stores & put on wall in your room.
Can also display flash cards or posters showing key concepts.
Keep changing or rotating display to keep it fresh.
‘Active’ Revision Methods

Notes: Chunk It

What?
If it’s hard for you to recall lots of facts or numbers, then grouping or ‘chunking’ can help.

How Use?
Experts say working memory only holds 5-9 items at once.
So creating groups is a ‘hack’ to help you remember more.

One classic example is to group numbers by spotting patterns that make them more memorable.

Example: look at these numbers for 10 sec and try to memorize them:
1492, 1939, 1861, 1989, 1917

Now break them down into groups of 4:
1492, 1939, 1861, 1989, 1917

Columbus arrives to the New World
Start of WW2
Start of the US Civil War
Fall of the Berlin Wall
October Revolution in Russia

*Tip: Break down bigger tasks into smaller chunks for easier learning.
Notes: Card Sorting

What?
When testing yourself with flash cards, put them in piles based on gaps in your knowledge.

How Use?
Making cards is just the start – it’s vital to use them to build recall.
So be honest & have piles for cards you get right or wrong.
Then work on your ‘wrong’ answers to plug gaps in learning.
Recall: ‘Focus’ Music Playlists

What?
Music or silence when revising? Science says silence is best. But if you can’t do it, try ‘focus’ tracks

How Use?
Music with lyrics uses working memory so affects your focus
So try instrumentals so you get ‘background’ but not distraction
You’ll find lots of ‘focus’ playlists to try on Apple Music & Spotify
Notes: ‘Focus’ Apps

What?
They can help you cope with the biggest distraction of them all – your phone!

How Use?
You set a timer for say 25 mins when you’ll not use the phone
With one very popular app, you plant seeds & grow trees
Depending on if you stay off your phone, they live or die!
Notes: ‘Focus’ Browser Add-in

What?
If you also get distracted easily online, then use a ‘blocker’ on your browser.

How Use?
You simply install an extension on a browser such as Chrome. One example is Productivity Owl where you set time limits. So if you linger too long on a page, the Owl flies over & closes it!
Notes: **Flash Card Apps**

**What?**
If you get bored making real flash cards, then use an app to make digital ones!

**How Use?**
Just search for apps like Quizlet & install on your phone

Creating basic cards is simple & you can test yourself lots!

You can often also share sets of cards with your friends.
Recall: **Image Chains**

**What?**

‘Chaining’ is a classic way to recall a random list of words by linking them in a wacky story.

**How Use?**

Put each word in a story with an image & the crazier the better!

That’s because your brain is good at recalling ‘new’ things.

Treat your wacky images like a ‘movie’ & ‘play’ it over in your head to help it stick.

Say you must recall these Geography terms for river processes: **deforestation, sediment, meander, hydrograph, levees**. So you might use a daft story like...

One day Forest decided to...

...eat a sad mint which...

...made him feel very mean...

...and a bit hyper...

...so he refused to lend anyone his Levi's!

**Deforestation** | **Sediment** | **Meander**

**Hydrograph** | **Levees**
Notes: ‘Pomodoro’ Apps

What?
Using a timer on your phone cuts distractions and helps manage your Pomodoros!

How Use?
Get an app like Be Focused, Pomodoro Time or ClearFocus
Then set your timer for 25 mins and train your attention span!
Afterwards, you can use your phone as your ‘Break’ reward!
Recall: **Lock Screen**

**What?**
Take a photo of something you need to learn & put it on your lock screen.

**How Use?**
Seeing the stuff all the time is a form of review & repetition.

It might be just a 30-second glance waiting at a bus stop.

But it keeps the material fresh and gets your brain thinking!
Recall: **Photo Gallery**

**What?**
Take more photos for a key topic and create a photo gallery on your phone.

**How Use?**
Take snaps of pages from your books, or screenshot websites.

Then put them in a separate gallery with a name like ‘PE’.

Later, you can flick through the images as a quick review.
Notes: **Columns**

**What?**
Single A4 sheet that can be folded as another way to condense notes on a topic

**How Use?**
Use the narrow columns to cut your notes down to core facts
Doing that forces your brain to pick out the main ideas
Later, it’s an easy format to use for reviewing the topic
‘Active’ Revision Methods

Recall: Look, Cover, Say...

What?
Classic technique for learning sets of key words – and then checking your recall

How Use?
Write terms in first column as initial way to

Later, fold sheet so first column is ‘covered’ and hides words

Next, ‘say’ each word out loud, then write, check & correct