



BIRMINGHAM CITY  
University

# WORRIED? DON'T BE

Revision tips to help  
you survive your exams



Exams are creeping up and you know you should be revising.

But where do you even start?

How do you stop getting distracted?

Whatever study problems you're having, this handy guide will help you get through exams with as little stress as possible.

**Happy revising!**

## WHAT TYPE OF REVISER ARE YOU? TAKE THE QUIZ!

Everyone's brain works differently - are flash cards your thing? Or do you prefer diagrams or mind maps? Take this quick quiz to find out!



### Try these revision tips:

- Draw your own diagrams, cartoons or illustrations to remember big or difficult topics.
- Watch a video or documentary.
- You can't draw everything – add smaller doodles to your notes.
- Find infographics, posters and other visual resources online to help you.

### If you mostly answered As

You remember things better when you see something visual that explains the topics you're studying.



### These tips are also worth a try:

- Teach someone. This involves discussion, understanding and interpretation, and is ideal for remembering your topic.
- Use audiobooks.
- Recite what you know about a topic when you're doing other jobs like washing up. Sounds nuts, but it works!

### If you mostly answered Bs

You learn best by listening to someone talk about a subject and then discussing it through.



### Why not have a go with these ideas?

- Post-it notes. Everywhere!
- Flash cards. For the epic note taker, these smaller cards help you focus on what's important.
- Make a 'cheat sheet'. Include essential facts and answers to things that are worrying you.

### If you mostly answered Cs

Old fashioned written notes work best for you, but try these tricks to save time and avoid boredom.

# YOUR SECRET WEAPON AGAINST REVISION

Mind maps work for any type of studying, be it essays, revising, presentations, or coursework projects. Here are our five reasons why we love mind maps!

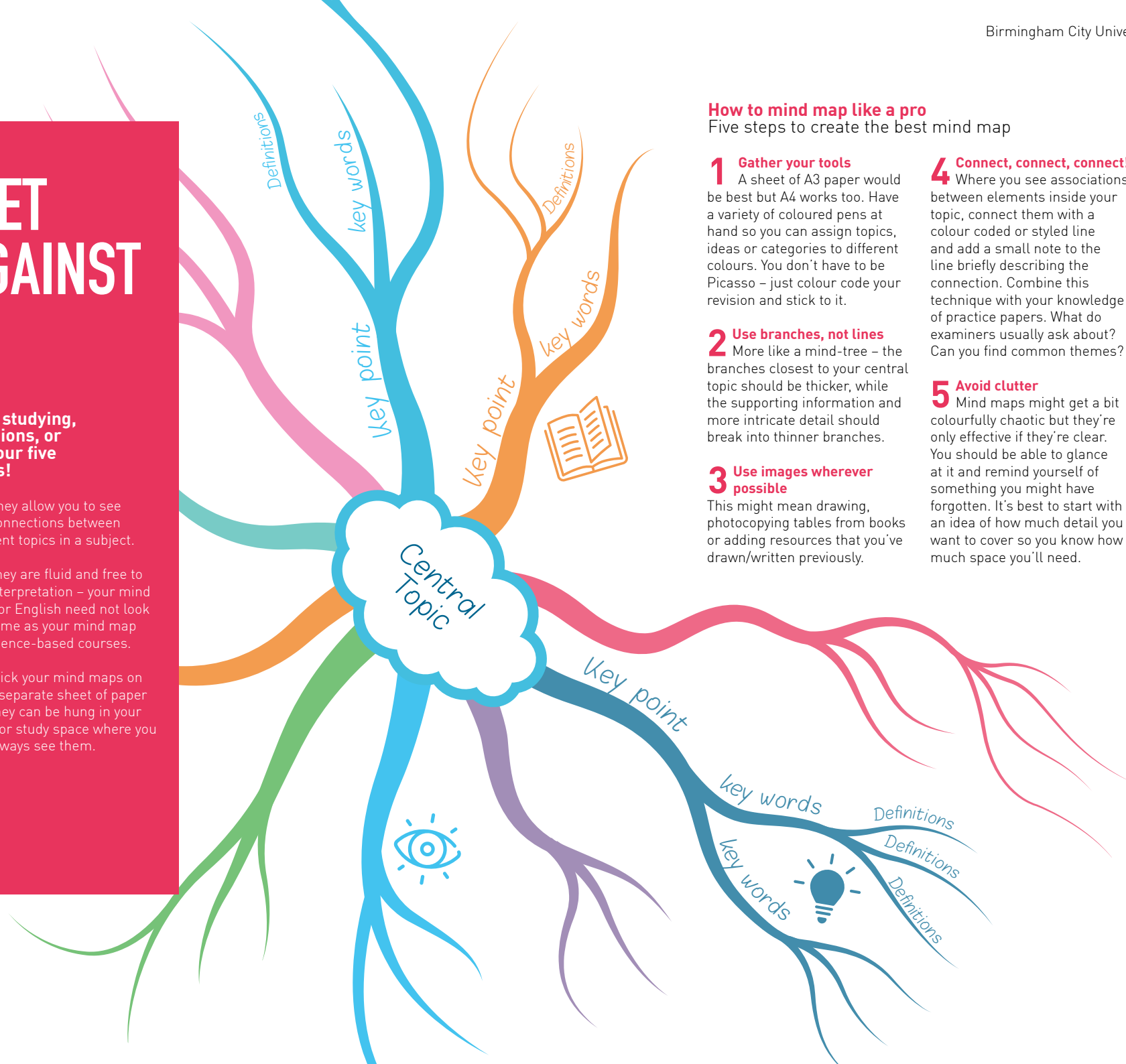
**1** You know how you get tired of looking at revision books? It might be because you find them boring but it's also because you're only consuming one type of information. Mind maps, on the other hand, harness the full range of skills – word, image, number, logic, rhythm, colour and spatial awareness – all at once. This activates more parts of your brain and improves your memory.

**2** Mind maps allow you to present large amounts of information on one page by creating associations between image, word and colour.

**3** They allow you to see connections between different topics in a subject.

**4** They are fluid and free to interpretation – your mind map for English need not look the same as your mind map for science-based courses.

**5** Stick your mind maps on a separate sheet of paper and they can be hung in your room or study space where you can always see them.



## How to mind map like a pro

Five steps to create the best mind map

**1 Gather your tools**  
A sheet of A3 paper would be best but A4 works too. Have a variety of coloured pens at hand so you can assign topics, ideas or categories to different colours. You don't have to be Picasso – just colour code your revision and stick to it.

**2 Use branches, not lines**  
More like a mind-tree – the branches closest to your central topic should be thicker, while the supporting information and more intricate detail should break into thinner branches.

**3 Use images wherever possible**  
This might mean drawing, photocopying tables from books or adding resources that you've drawn/written previously.

**4 Connect, connect, connect!**  
Where you see associations between elements inside your topic, connect them with a colour coded or styled line and add a small note to the line briefly describing the connection. Combine this technique with your knowledge of practice papers. What do examiners usually ask about? Can you find common themes?

**5 Avoid clutter**  
Mind maps might get a bit colourfully chaotic but they're only effective if they're clear. You should be able to glance at it and remind yourself of something you might have forgotten. It's best to start with an idea of how much detail you want to cover so you know how much space you'll need.

# REVISION HACKS



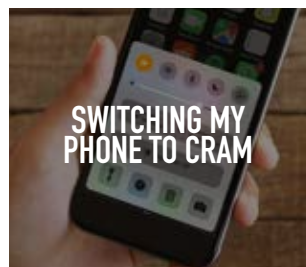
**PROBLEM:**  
I'm completely unmotivated.

**HACK:**  
Reward yourself...  
...with sweets or a healthier snack. Use small food that comes in large quantities and space them out across the pages of your work books and notes. Once you've completed a page you can treat yourself.



**"CLEAR YOUR MIND BEFORE REVISING. TAKE A WALK OR LISTEN TO YOUR FAVOURITE MUSIC SO YOUR MIND DOESN'T WANDER OFF ONTO SOMETHING ELSE WHILE REVISING."**

TINA KODRA  
Psychology student



**PROBLEM:**  
I find it really hard to start because I get distracted.

**HACK:**  
When you're revising, everything else seems more fun and it's hard not to sneak a little look at social media after you've written a paragraph of notes. To stop your phone distracting you, try:

- Putting it on airplane mode
- Placing it in another room or with a family member
- Lock it by entering the wrong password – this will make it unusable for a period of time.



## PROBLEM

I have four exams and a resit. I don't know what to focus on first!

## HACK

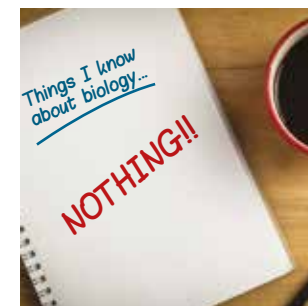
Start with the subject that gives you the most trouble. Even if the exam you're dreading the most is the last one you sit, you will need to spend more time on it. You'll feel more confident if you dedicate more time to it.

## PROBLEM:

I just haven't got a clue how to get started.

## HACK:

Show what you know. Pick a topic and write down everything you know about it. This will show you what you need to learn and which areas you need to focus on.



## PROBLEM

I'm finding it hard to manage my time.

## HACK

How does anyone have time to do everything with exams coming up?! The answer? Lots of planning. Start with filling out the revision timetable in this booklet, but for your study sessions the Pomodoro technique is king. It involves setting a timer for 25 minutes and working on an activity until the timer rings, then taking a five-minute break. Repeat this three times and then take a 30 minute break.



**"REMEMBER TO TREAT YOURSELF – A DAY OFF OR A SHOPPING TRIP."**

SOTON MANUEL  
Sociology student

**"MAKE A PLAN TO REVERSE A BIT EVERY DAY."**

ANDREEA DALIA BLAGA  
Digital Media  
Technology student

## Quick hacks

- 1 Type in a sans-serif font like Arial. They are fast fonts to read which is why they are used for nearly everything!
- 2 Spray an unfamiliar scent. This can make you more alert if you're tired.
- 3 Listen to music but not something you like, it's distracting! Try something instrumental.

# MY REVISION TIMETABLE

## How to plan your timetable

Having trouble starting your revision? Get motivated with a timetable. If you don't know how to make a good one, we've got your back. Just follow these five steps:

### 1. Colour code your sessions

to match your syllabus. Having trouble with biology? Mark it red.



### 2. Use the Pomodoro method

(which this timetable is built around). Split your revision into 25 minute slots with a five minute break.



### 3. Be sure to build in a break

when you come back from work or college - beware of burnout!



### 4. Avoid distractions

by turning off your phone or putting it on airplane mode with the internet turned off.



### 5. Traffic light your syllabus

Find out what topic needs the most attention and which ones you know well - do this by marking your syllabus. This will allow you to timetable more sessions for the subjects you're struggling with and highlight specific topics in those subjects.

### Follow this rule:

If this came up in the exam I'd run out of the exam room.

I know what this topic is about but couldn't answer an in-depth question.

I've got a good understanding of this and I've performed well with this topic on practice papers. I just need to have a regular review.

“Set concrete goals, reward yourself when you complete the goal and think about what you will achieve by studying for the exam.”

SOTON MANUEL  
Sociology student

“Make your revision timetable as realistic as possible. Don't bother filling the whole day with revision if you know you won't stick to it, instead start off with revising for one or two hours a day and then increase the time as you get more into it.”

TINA KODRA  
Psychology student

Download your blank weekly template at

[bcu.ac.uk/revision-table](https://bcu.ac.uk/revision-table)



## MONDAY

8.30-10.30AM	Highlight specific topics inside a subject that need extra attention	5 MIN BREAK		5 MIN BREAK		5 MIN BREAK		30 MIN BREAK
		5 MIN BREAK		5 MIN BREAK		5 MIN BREAK		30 MIN BREAK
LUNCH								
2-4 PM	Biology	5 MIN BREAK		5 MIN BREAK		5 MIN BREAK		30 MIN BREAK
4.30-6.30 PM		5 MIN BREAK		5 MIN BREAK		5 MIN BREAK		30 MIN BREAK
DINNER								
EVENING	Fit your timetable around your days off. Sometimes you might have work or college so slot in morning and evening sections accordingly.							

## KEY DATES

**13 MAY**  
Exams begin

**14 JUNE**  
BTEC exams are over!

**21 JUNE**  
GCSE exams are over!

**28 JUNE**  
A Level exams are over

**29 JUNE**  
BCU Open Day

**MID JULY ONWARDS**  
BTEC results

**15 AUGUST**  
A Level results



# ANSWERING EXAM QUESTIONS

**YOU'VE LEARNED, YOU'VE REVISED, BUT NOW YOU'RE SAT IN THE EXAM HALL WONDERING HOW ON EARTH YOU'RE MEANT TO GO ABOUT ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS IN FRONT OF YOU...**

Getting all that knowledge out of your head and down onto paper is more than tricky. So here's the good, the bad and the ugly of answering exam questions to make it a whole lot easier.

If you're doing a coursework-only subject or qualification, your uni degree may well include exams, so these tips will be useful to help prepare you for all kinds of assessments.

## THE GOOD

### Prep prep prep!

Get to know your exam. How many questions are there? How many marks are at stake? How long should your answers be? Ask your teachers, practise with old exam papers and get in the know!

### The question!

The question is your friend, it's there to help. Make sure you understand it. Identify key words and what it's asking you to do. Discuss? Evaluate? Compare? Outline?

### PEE!

Always remember to PEE all over your exam. Point. Evidence. Explain. A nice easy structure that's easy to remember and carry out. Make your point, back it up with some evidence and then explain it. Structure can make or break a good exam answer and this technique, as recommended by our student Soton, is a winner.

## THE BAD

### Panic!

You've got this. You've done your prep, you know your structure, so don't dive straight in. You have time so use it. Flick through the paper, read all the questions and spend a few minutes planning your answer.

### Waffle!

Absolutely make sure you avoid waffle! You need to be clear and concise. Our student Andreea suggests writing down everything about the topic and then selecting the relevant bits to include in your answer.

### Post-mortems!

It's over. The exam paper has been collected in. You can't change anything. Make sure you get it out of your head and focus on your next exam. Then when they're over, go and enjoy summer!

## THE UGLY

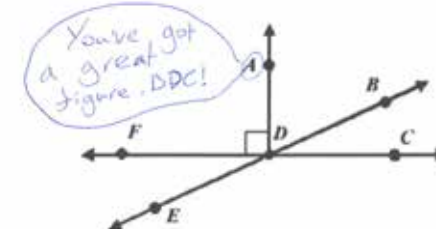
If all our top tips go out the window, remember you won't be having as bad of a time as these:

7. Briefly explain what hard water is

Ice

(2)

2. Name an angle complimentary to BDC:



6) Overpopulation has been an issue in several countries. What do you think is the best solution for overpopulation?

THE HUNGER GAMES!

(3 Marks)

# BEAT EXAM STRESS WITH COLOURING

COLOURING IS A HELPFUL WAY TO DE-STRESS AND A GREAT WAY TO TAKE A BREAK FROM REVISION. IT'S NOT JUST FOR KIDS TOO! COLOURING FOR GROWN-UPS IS ALL THE RAGE AND EXPERTS HAVE BEEN SHOUTING ABOUT THE CALMING BENEFITS FOR OVER A DECADE.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

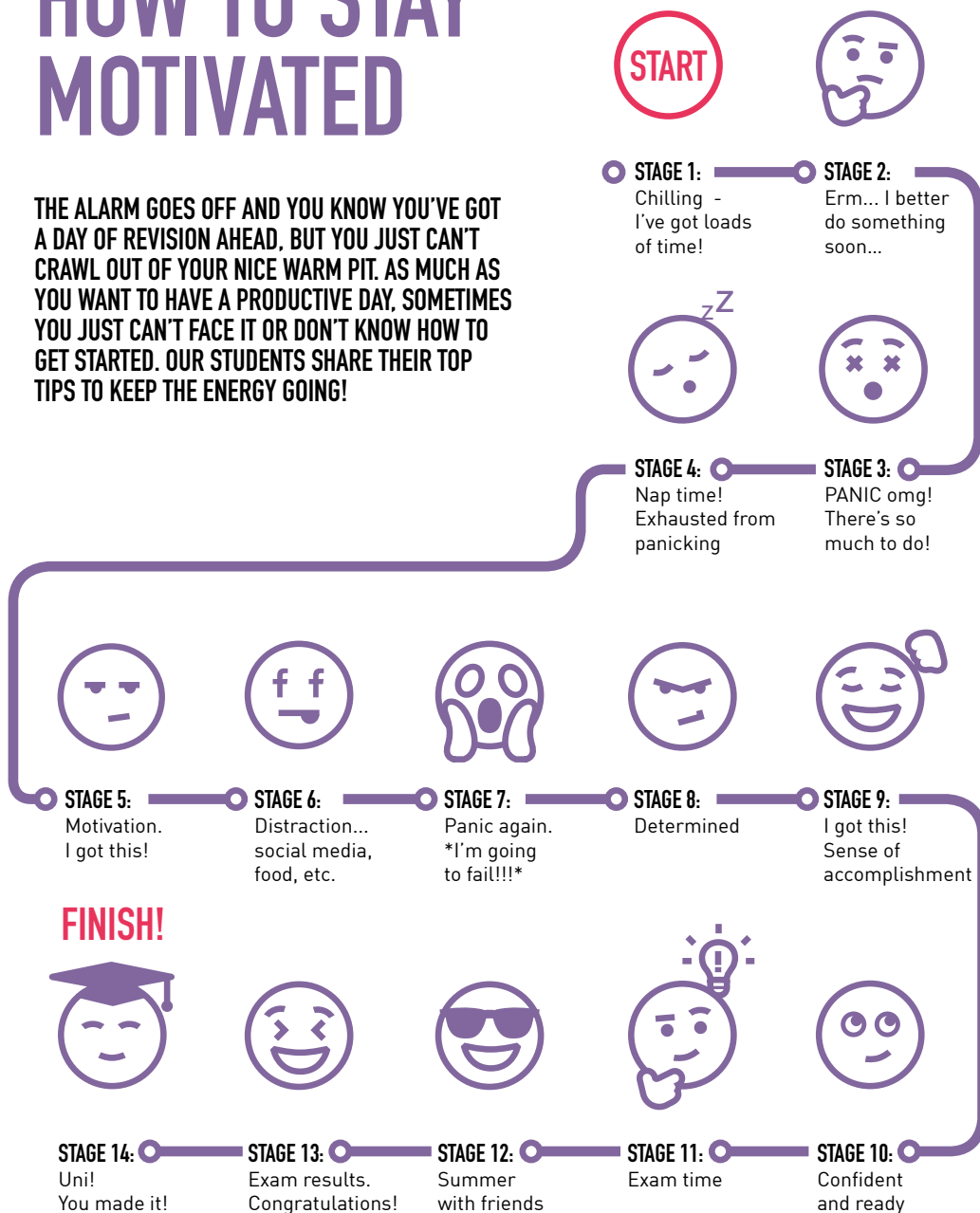
Sometimes when you're trying to remember a fact but you can't think of the answer, it will only come to you later when you're doing something else entirely. By focusing on an activity like colouring, you can prevent negative and unhelpful thoughts from entering your mind. It can reduce anxiety and help you concentrate and be more mindful!





# HOW TO STAY MOTIVATED

THE ALARM GOES OFF AND YOU KNOW YOU'VE GOT A DAY OF REVISION AHEAD, BUT YOU JUST CAN'T CRAWL OUT OF YOUR NICE WARM PIT. AS MUCH AS YOU WANT TO HAVE A PRODUCTIVE DAY, SOMETIMES YOU JUST CAN'T FACE IT OR DON'T KNOW HOW TO GET STARTED. OUR STUDENTS SHARE THEIR TOP TIPS TO KEEP THE ENERGY GOING!



ANDREEA SAYS

## "SET MANAGEABLE GOALS"

Split complex goals into main targets and sub-goals.

Make sure you plan your time well.

Keep track of what you have achieved to motivate you.

Tick off each task along the way for a sense of accomplishment.

Reward yourself after each goal you reach.

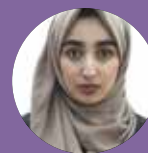


TINA SAYS

## "TALK TO YOUR FRIENDS AND OLDER SIBLINGS WHO HAVE ALL BEEN THROUGH EXAMS BEFORE"

Having a chat with friends can help motivate you and remind you that you are not alone.

Group study sessions are a great way to motivate you as you can share any revisions tips and bounce ideas off each other.



RIMAH SAYS

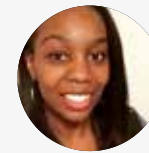
## "KEEP A POSITIVE MINDSET"

Focus on the positives, like what you have learned that day.

Try and see the lighter side of life.

Do the best that you can.

Remember, a positive mindset can help you keep focus through the whole process and help you achieve good grades.



SOTON SAYS

## KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE PRIZE!

Remember that after all of your hard work you will be rewarded with qualifications that will help carry you through the rest of your life.

Make plans for what you will do with all of your free time before you start your exciting journey on to university.

Imagine how great it will feel when you know that you have worked to the best of your ability and finally have your qualifications.



“

If you hadn't considered university before or your results weren't what you expected, go through Clearing. You have nothing to lose but potentially everything to gain.”

Charmaine Boulter

# WHAT IS CLEARING?

**IS CLEARING FOR ME? LAST YEAR, ALMOST 68,000 STUDENTS FOUND THEIR UNIVERSITY PLACE THROUGH UCAS CLEARING. SO YOU WOULDN'T BE ALONE IN EXPLORING YOUR CHOICES. THERE'S A WHOLE LOAD OF REASONS WHY CLEARING MIGHT BE THE OPTION FOR YOU!**

## 1 I'm worried about my exam results

If you're worried you might not get into your first choice, why not plan a backup option just in case? Rhiannon didn't get the results she wanted, but with a bit of research she found out what Clearing courses were available.

**“Going through Clearing doesn't make you stupid or a failure, it just means that things didn't go to plan and you're weighing up the rest of your options.”**

Rhiannon Fidler

## 2 I can't decide if I want to go to uni

Go to uni / don't go to uni / go to uni / don't go to uni. If you change your mind more than the weather, you've still got time to make your decision! That's just what happened to Building Surveying student Scott.

**“At first, I didn't want to go to university but a lot of my friends were and I got caught up in the whole buzz of it.”**

Scott Vallyley

**CLEARING HELPS STUDENTS WHO DON'T HAVE ANY OFFERS TO FIND COURSES WHERE PLACES ARE STILL AVAILABLE. IT ALSO APPLIES TO THOSE WHO APPLY LATE.**

## 3 I chose the wrong subject

You most likely chose your subject a year ago and now you're not so sure you made the right choice.

When Hilary decided jewellery design was more her thing than the chemistry course she applied for, Clearing was the perfect option.

**“I was happy to be free to try again and apply to a course through Clearing.”**

Hilary Ogden

## 4 I chose the wrong city

Deciding where you want to live for the next few years is difficult. If you're doubting your first choice, Clearing is an ideal chance to re-think your new home town.

**“As soon as I'd found out I could go to a uni closer to home and better than my insurance choice, it was a no brainer for me to see if BCU had the course I wanted. Birmingham is somewhere I wanted to study - the nightlife is one of the best in the country and it's central to other cities.”**

Suneet Patel (from Bolton)

## KEY DATES

**05 JULY 2019**

Clearing opens  
Already got your results?  
Beat the queue!

**MID JULY**

BTEC results

**15 AUGUST 2019**

A Level Results Day  
Call us as soon as you  
have your grades.

## WHAT TO DO NEXT

### 1. Start your research

It's never too early! Have a look at what courses and universities are available.

### 2. Follow social media accounts

Find the universities you're interested in on Facebook and Twitter for the latest news and student stories.

### 3. Sign up for updates

Many universities send out regular emails, which are a great way to get to know more about the places you want to study, and be the first to hear about courses available in Clearing.

# MAKING THE MOST OF SUMMER



**YOUR WORK IS DONE AND NOTHING QUITE MATCHES THAT FEELING OF WALKING OUT OF YOUR FINAL EXAM. THE REVISION TIMETABLE HAS BEEN UNCEREMONIOUSLY TORN FROM THE WALL AND YOU ARE NO LONGER A SLAVE TO STUDY. BUT WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH ALL YOUR FREE TIME?**

## Take a break

If you've been saving all your spare pennies, you may have enough cash put aside to jump on a plane and visit some far-flung countries. It may take a little planning but there are also voluntary schemes available that could help you afford a trip abroad! Or, keep it cheap and simple, get a few mates together and head off camping or to a festival for a few days.

**TO HELP YOU MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR LAST FEW WEEKS BEFORE HEADING TO UNI, WE ASKED SOME OF OUR STUDENTS WHAT THEY DID WITH THEIR MEGA SUMMER. WHY NOT TRY ONE OF THEIR SUGGESTIONS?**



## Do a dummy Brum run

If you're moving to Birmingham then why not get orientated a little before the big move? A couple of day trips will be a great way to help you find your feet. If you're already from Birmingham, why not investigate areas of the city you are less familiar with? You could also check out some lesser known tourist attractions. Did you know there's a burger bar under the railway arches in Digbeth?



## Relax!

And breathe out...feel better? You certainly deserve to relax after the past few weeks of intense study and revision. Take it easy, go for a stroll, read that book you have never got around to, enjoy time with friends and family, and enjoy watching a bit more telly than usual. Get yourself in a good frame of mind before starting your studies; it's going to be a big change after the summer, and you're going to love it.



## Work

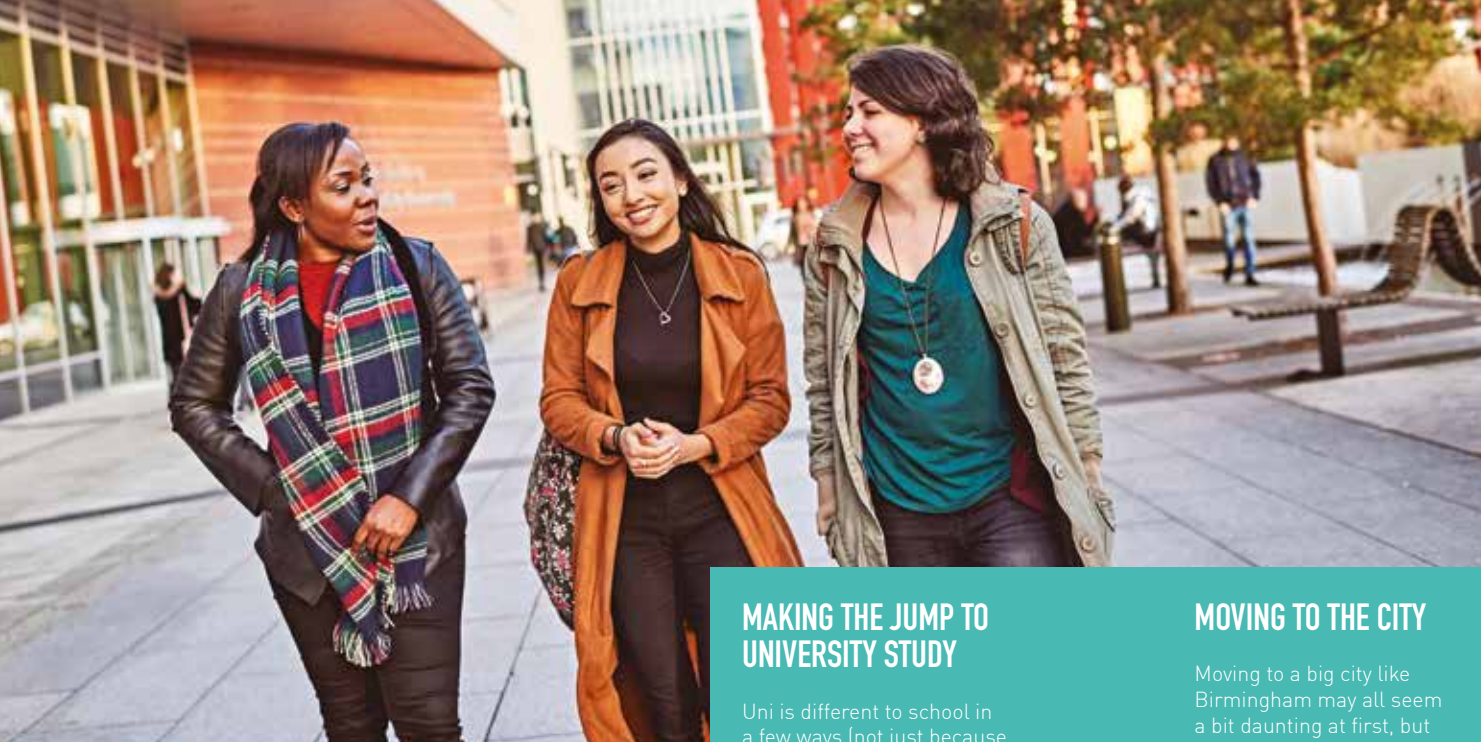
Stashing some hard-earned cash this summer could be a welcome buffer once you start uni. Also, it may not be paid but you could always look out for some work experience related to your course. Don't overwork yourself though and make sure you still have spare time to enjoy doing other things.



## Skydiving

OK, perhaps you may want to give this a miss if you don't have a head for heights, but ever thought of taking up a new hobby or interest? There may be things you have been curious about for years – so have a go! When you get to uni there are societies for pretty much everything, so why not get going with a new interest before you get here?





# GETTING READY FOR UNIVERSITY

**GOING TO UNI IS A LIFE-CHANGING MOMENT! AND WHILE YOU MIGHT BE EXCITED ABOUT MOVING OUT AND MAKING FRIENDS, IT'S OFTEN NERVE WRACKING TOO! OUR STUDENTS HAVE SHARED THEIR EXPERIENCE TO MAKE STARTING YOUR STUDIES THAT BIT LESS SCARY.**

## MAKING THE JUMP TO UNIVERSITY STUDY

Uni is different to school in a few ways (not just because it's bigger and has a pub on campus!). There'll be new ways of studying and different workloads to get used to as well. You'll need to get organised, disciplined and figure a great deal out for yourself, but there will be rewards on the way as you develop your learning and keep on growing.

**"There is a lot of independent study involved that requires you to do your own research and understand topics by yourself."**

RIMAH

**"Independency. At university, you are responsible for managing your studies."**

ANDREEA

## MOVING TO THE CITY

Moving to a big city like Birmingham may all seem a bit daunting at first, but it won't be long before you feel like a native and those weekend visits back home will become fewer.

**"Visit the city, stay for a few days and explore the area with friends, parents or even by yourself."**

SOTON

**"Get to know the city beforehand; Google some good places to go out and visit."**

TINA

**"DON'T BE  
AFRAID  
TO BE  
YOURSELF."**



## BECOMING MORE INDEPENDENT

You may well feel you have been standing on your own two feet for some time now, but not having your parents around to help with the cooking and washing can feel a bit odd at first. There's plenty of support out there should you need it! So how did our students feel when they made the leap?

**"You may feel like you are not ready to move out and become independent, but everything will come naturally when you do. If the first months are hard, ask for advice whenever you need it."**

ANDREEA

**"It's a challenge but it's something to look forward to."**

SOTON

## MAKING FRIENDS

Friends. They're great to have around, even if they are a pain some of the time. Don't worry about missing your friends from home, you'll be making some new ones when you start uni. There will be about 8,000 new students starting at the same time as you, so it's extremely likely you'll find some lifelong companions among them. It would be a surprise if you didn't feel slightly nervous about meeting new people but remember, everybody else is trying to make new friends too.

**"Everyone is in the same boat, so try and speak to as many people as you can."**

TINA

**"Be positive and try to get involved as much as you can. The Students' Union and societies are the best place to find friends with the same interests as you."**

ANDREEA

# CHECK! ESSENTIAL ITEMS TO PACK

## CHECKLIST: WHAT TO TAKE TO UNI

### Bedding:

- ☐ Duvet
- ☐ Sheets
- ☐ Pillows
- ☐ Towels

### Bedroom items:

- ☐ Alarm
- ☐ Hot water bottle
- ☐ Desk lamp
- ☐ Door stop

### ☐ Bathroom and first-aid items

### Electrical items:

- ☐ Laptop
- ☐ Memory stick
- ☐ Headphones
- ☐ Torch

### Clothes:

- ☐ Casual wear
- ☐ Fleece tops
- ☐ Dressing gown  
and slippers
- ☐ Underwear
- ☐ Going out clothes
- ☐ Interview clothes
- ☐ Waterproof shoes
- ☐ Trainers
- ☐ Joggers
- ☐ Coat
- ☐ Laundry bag

### ☐ Stationery

### Documents:

- ☐ Passport
- ☐ NHS medical card
- ☐ NI number

PACKING YOUR WHOLE LIFE INTO ONE SUITCASE (OR THE BOOT OF YOUR PARENTS' CAR IF YOU'RE LUCKY) SEEMS LIKE AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK. YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO TAKE EVERYTHING, SO WE'VE MADE A HANDY CHECKLIST TO HELP YOU MAKE THE MOST OF ALL THE SPACE YOU'VE GOT.



## TOP TIPS

Think about how you are getting to uni.

Do you need to take everything on the train?

Can you move more things on another weekend?

Find out what may be supplied and what you can buy when you arrive.

There's no need to break the bank on a massive shopping spree.

Do friends or family have some spare items they'd donate to you?

## THREE ITEMS YOU MUST NOT FORGET:



**Diary/notebook**  
To write up lecture  
notes and reminders



**Laptop**  
To keep up to  
speed with work



**Phone**  
To stay in touch with  
family and friends





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