

Revision Study Skills and Exam Preparation



BE THE BEST YOU CAN BE

HOW TO DO BETTER AT GCSE

What is included for you:

- Quick Tips for Revising
- Hot Tips on revision and tackling the exam
- Some Exam words unravelled



Remember:

- **start revision early**
- **be well prepared**
- **read the questions carefully**
- **test yourself regularly**

QUICK TIPS FOR REVISING

- make yourself start however much you don't want to – the hardest bit is over with then!
- build in short breaks
- do frequent short exercises – stretches, neck and shoulder rolls, walking around etc
- drink water and get fresh air. Keep the temperature cool
- eat 'brain food' – avoid sugar and have lots of healthy snacks around to eat little and often
- get plenty of sleep
- take a day off and do something completely different
- don't leave the difficult bits to the end
- do something relaxing between revising and bedtime
- STOP and take a break if you start feeling frustrated, angry, overwhelmed. Make a note of the problem to take to your next lesson, and move on to something else
- focus on what you have done, not all the things that you haven't – every little helps
- promise yourself little rewards after each session – a favourite TV programme, reading a trashy novel or going out with friends
- at the end of each session, file away your notes and clutter so that your work-area is clear for the next session.

"Believe in what you're doing. If you don't believe in it no one else will."

Jay-z, musician and entrepreneur

Doing better in Exams: Some Advice for Students

Year after year students don't do as well as they could in exams because they don't revise well and they make very common mistakes in exams. This advice can help you make the best of what you have learned.

Revision tips:

- **reading through your notes IS NOT REVISING**
- start your revision in good time
- plan a revision timetable
- highlight examination dates and times
- spread your subjects out over time so you cover each one several times
- plan for half-hour or, at most, one-hour slots. Any more of one subject and nothing extra is likely to sink in
- in the evenings after College, plan one or two subjects only. Leave time for relaxation
- plan to revise specific topics or aspects of a subject – for example, not just science but human systems, or waves, or chemical reactions, or electricity.

Revising at home:

Know how you learn best

- everybody has a way of learning that suits them well. What works best for you?
- try watching Konnie Huq's "Revision Tips" Videos on You Tube, they take about two and a half minutes each and you may find something that works for you.

Try some of these to see what works for you

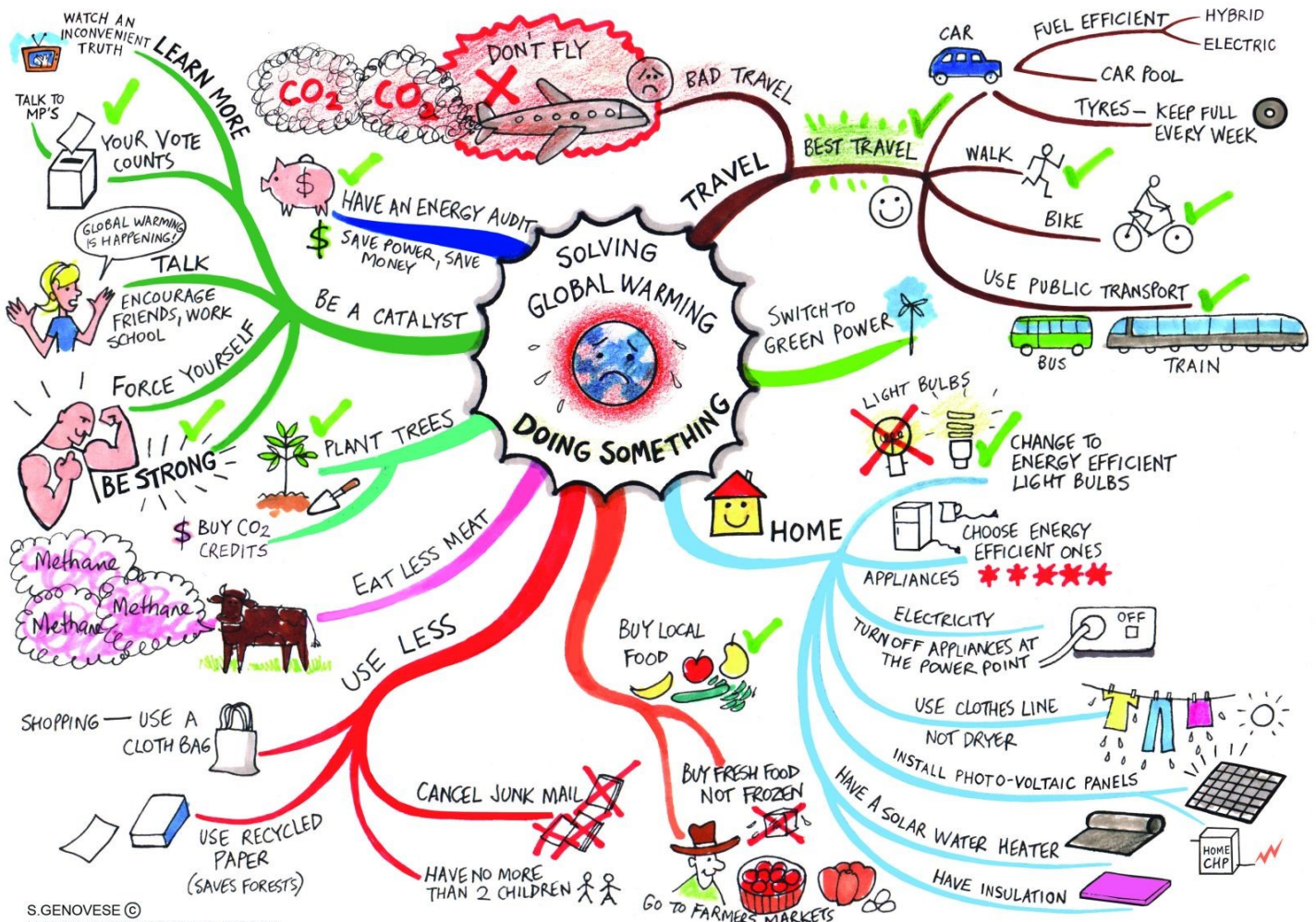
- music in the background sometimes helps, but don't try to revise with the TV or radio on and definitely not whilst social messaging
- read through a topic and make brief notes on cards or post it notes which can be used for further revision later. Maybe stick up the post it notes around the house so that you can read them often
- instead of writing notes in words, draw pictures. These visual images can be very powerful
- redraw diagrams and check how well they match the original
- use flow charts to sequence events or activities. Use linking words between boxes to illustrate the nature of the sequence
- use colours to highlight key words in your notes or revision books
- work with a partner to help and test each other on, for example, explaining the meaning of key words (and spelling them correctly), rearranging chemical equations, performing calculations, recalling linked facts or dates, drawing conclusions from evidence
- use GCSE Bitesize, My Maths and other useful websites suggested by your subject teachers as they have been proven to be effective in doing better in exams
- use Classroom – teachers have put on loads of resources

HOW CAN I REMEMBER MORE?

- in order to store information in our LONG-TERM memory, it must be:
 - ◊ reviewed
 - ◊ stored in a meaningful way (not just learning your textbook off by heart!) – **you need to understand it**
- pictures
- mindmaps
- post-its on the fridge
- essay plans – it's like learning a story!

Have you tried any of these strategies?

- review all notes with a highlighter
- work through a range past papers and prepare model answers. Then write down what you did and didn't know!
- produce spider diagrams
- make a checklist.



ARE YOU PREPARED?



Get your 'Students Essentials' Exam Equipment

NOW!

Being prepared for the exam:

Make sure you are ready on the day. Always bring:

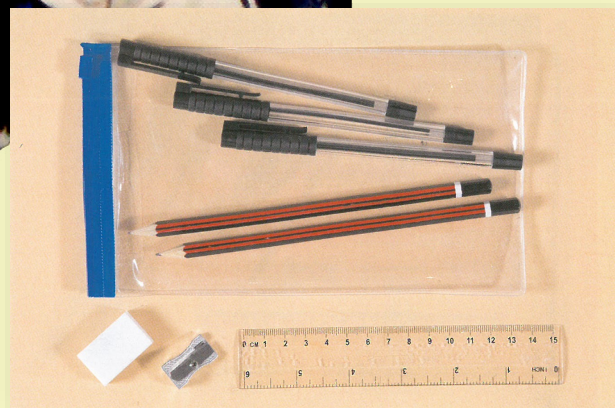
- a couple of black pens and sharpened pencils, a rubber and a ruler in a clear plastic bag or clear pencil case.
- a calculator

You may sometimes need:

- a protractor

Only £2.00

From the Pastoral Office



TACKLING THE EXAM

- while waiting for the exam to start, read the front of the exam paper so you know exactly what to do
- read each question carefully – twice is better than once. Check how many marks are available for the answer. Write neither too much nor too little
- answer the question; don't simply repeat it or make up a question of your own
- write your answer if you feel confident. If not, go on to the next question. Don't spend time on questions you are unsure of until you have been through the whole paper once
- check all calculations. Does the answer make sense and have you included the units?
- check information in graphs, tables and pictures. Did you read them correctly?
- check your spellings of specific words, but if you are not sure of the spelling write your answer anyway. You may get the mark
- if you have to draw diagrams, charts or graphs, use a sharp pencil and draw accurately, using a ruler where necessary
- once you have answered all the more straightforward questions go through the paper again, tackling those questions which are more difficult. If on the second reading a question is still very difficult, move on to the next question.

Avoiding common exam mistakes

- read the question correctly so you don't miss the point
- check how many marks are given for each question and write enough but not too much
- look at tables, graphs, drawings and photographs very carefully so you don't miss anything
- use the correct words and try to spell them properly
- answer the question; don't just repeat it.

WHY REVISE?

- revision is exactly what the name suggests: 'relooking' at something you have already done
- you need to revise, because your short term memory can only hold seven bits of information at a time. You will have forgotten a lot of information that you have learnt this term!

'But I have coped before without revising...'

- GCSE examinations are harder than most people realise, success at this level requires an organised and mature approach
- some of you will have many exams in the space of a couple of weeks – so that needs planning and organisation.

Examination Question Words - Unravelled

Function of:	state its job
Structure of:	what it is made up of, the way the text is organised
Explain:	make clear, show how something works
Describe:	state how something looks, feels smells etc
Define:	give the exact meaning of
Analyse:	find or show the characteristic of
Assess:	estimate the value of
Appraise:	value it
Evaluate:	assess or appraise
Method:	describe what you did
Results:	state what happened
Conclusion:	explain why what happened, did
Interpret:	explain the meaning of
Variable:	something that you can change eg temperature
Independent:	variable is the variable that you are changing
Dependent:	variable is the variable you measure or observe
A Control:	a sample that has not been changed
Advise:	to offer information
Argue:	to put forward a viewpoint
Fact:	information that is true
Fiction:	literature that describes imaginary events or people
Imagery:	the use of language to create a vivid image or picture
Metaphor:	a form of imagery when one thing is said to be another e.g. you are my sun and moon
Narrator:	the person who tells a story
Persuade:	to convince a reader or listener to accept a point of view
Simile:	a form of imagery when one thing is compared to another e.g. he had a face like a wrinkled prune

ORGANISING YOUR REVISION TIMETABLE

You can use a copy of a blank calendar or devise your own.

Write in any critical dates such as exams, coursework deadlines, College holidays or your birthday. Don't forget any oral exams if you are taking a modern language, or PE practical exam.

In the evenings on College days you cannot plan to revise more than two or three subjects.

Decide whether you will revise on Saturdays or Sundays. Perhaps you will do a little on both days, but it's a good idea to have one day clear every week.

Begin to map out a rota for revising all your subjects. At first just write the subjects in against a date. Then try to identify particular topics you plan to revise. For example, where you are doing science revision you may write: 'science – human beings' or 'science – electricity.' For English Literature you might identify certain books or plays.

Leave some days a bit vague in case you need extra time for some topics.

Now have a

good look at the whole plan. If possible, share it with one of your parents or an older brother or sister who has been through GCSE's already.

Check that:

- you have time to revise everything and to go over topics more than once
- you have enough time for your coursework
- you are not taking on too much at any one time
- just before each exam you have enough time to go over that subject.

Put your plan on your bedroom wall or somewhere you can easily see it.

Try to stick to your plan, but remember you can adjust it as you go along as long as adjusting does not mean skipping bits.

	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.	SUN.
3p.	Home from school						
3p.	SNACK + REST						
4:30p.	SCIENCE	MATH	SCIENCE	MATH		Wrestling Match	
4p.	Wrestling Practice						
5p.	SPANISH VOCAB	ART	SPANISH VOCAB	ART			
6p.	DINNER						
7p.	VIOLIN PRACTICE	LIT.	VIOLIN PRACTICE	LIT.			

An example of a checklist

Add in columns to show what you need to do... this will help with you to plan your revision timetable later

Checklist

	Learnt in class	Rewritten notes	Revised	Done an exam question
Social Influence				
Conformity (including <u>Internalisation</u> and compliance) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanations of why people conform (including informational and normative social influence) • Describe Asch • Evaluate Asch • Further research 				
Minority influence (<u>Moscovici</u>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe it • Describe Asch • Evaluate <u>Moscovici</u> • Further research 				
Conformity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanations • <u>Milgram</u> (including variations) • Further research • Evaluation of <u>Milgram</u> • Ethical issues • Research issues • Explanations 				
Social Influence in Everyday Life				
Resisting social influence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resistance to conformity • Resistance to obedience 				
Individual differences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locus of control • Attributions (stable) 				

Break down the specification into chunks and add in key information that you have to learn

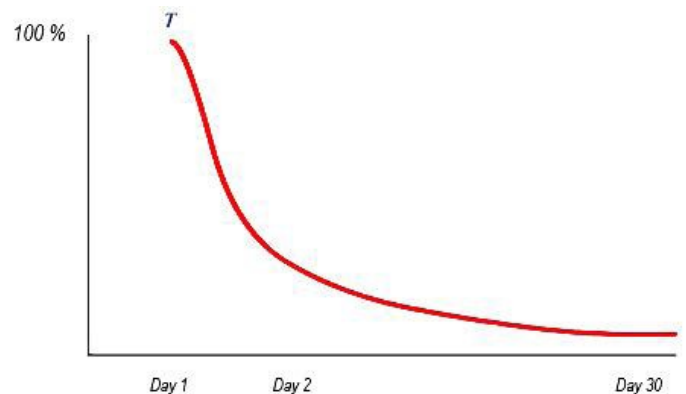
How do I know if I have actually learnt it?

- keep testing yourself use past papers
- tell your dog / cat / cousin / friends what you have learnt
- most students find the pressure of exams means that they recall things they hadn't realised they'd learnt



How much do we remember?

This is the forgetting curve –



within 30 days, we only remember around 20% of information learnt

REVISION IS NOT FUN!

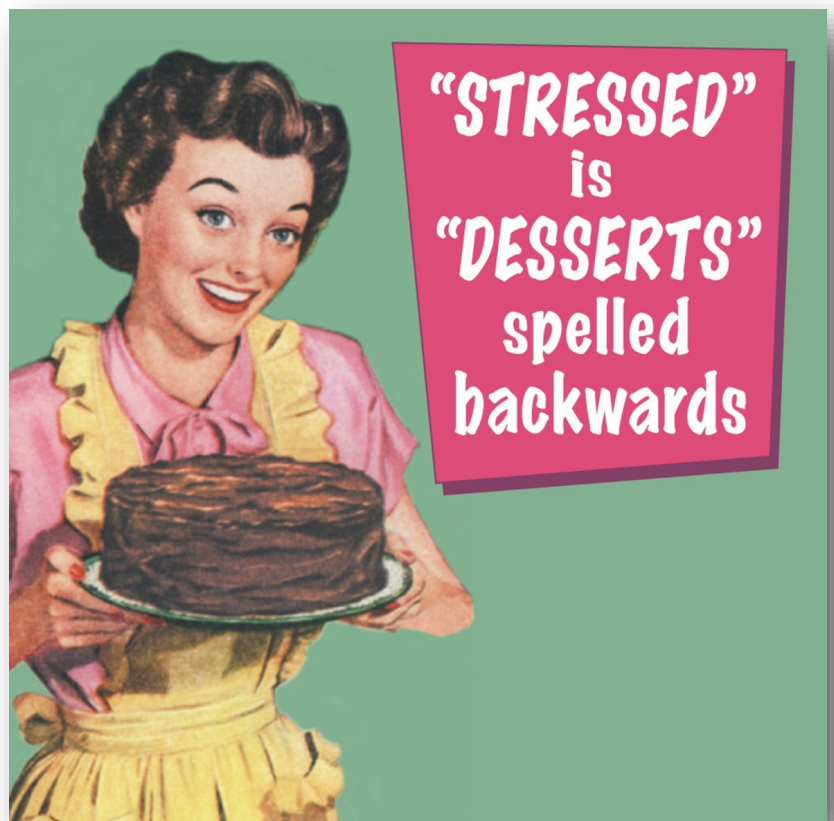
- revision requires concentration and self-discipline
- remember, this is a short-term goal – it won't last forever!
- **make it more bearable...**
 - revise for short bursts
 - between revision slots, take a break – move rooms and do something else
 - do a couple of enjoyable things a day – reward yourself
 - have a tick-list of things you need to do

THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER

- there are lots of ways to revise none of them are right or wrong find what works for you
- research shows that active revision (making notes, doing past papers) is most effective
- GCSEs are harder than most people realise, success at this level requires an organised and mature approach

BUT NOW I AM STRESSED!

- **remember** feeling stressed at this time is normal and **a little stress often leads to optimal performance!**
- by **planning your revision** you will gain control – research by psychologists shows that gaining control is the best way of managing stress



MNEMONICS

A mnemonic is a simple rhyme or phrase which helps you remember factual information in the right order. Simply take the letters from the words you wish to remember and use them to make a memorable sentence.

1. My Very Easy Method Just Speeds Up Naming Planets

(Planets: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto)

2. Pop Stars Sing Naff Pop Ballads

(Stages in the Life of a Star: Protostar, Supergiant, Supernova, Neutron, Pulsar, Black Hole)

3. Never Eat Cake Eat Salad Sandwiches And Remain Young

(How to remember how to spell the word **NECESSARY**)

Rhymes

1. Divorced, beheaded, died, divorced, beheaded, survived

(Fate of Henry VIII's six wives)

2. In 1903, the Wright brother flew free (First successful flight)

3. Smiles of happiness come after having tankards of ale

Sin = opposite
hypoteneus

Cos = adjacent
hypoteneus

Tan = opposite
adjacent

LOCI METHOD

(Loci: Latin meaning Location & Item)

If you take the layout of your house or your kitchen you can link it to key words that you need to remember for exams.

E.g. the layout of a typical kitchen, linked to key words to do with Volcanoes. The more unusual the link, the better. If you can remember the items in the kitchen, you can recall the words that go with them very easily.

KITCHEN	KEY WORDS	Examples of Images
Table	Lava	(Lava dripping off the table)
Chair	Mud	(Muddy footprints on the chair)
Fridge	Dormant	(A sleeping dormouse in the fridge)
Toaster	Volcano	(Toaster shaped like a volcano and toast erupts out)
Kettle	Geyser	(Hot water & steam from the kettle)
Oven	Gas	(Gas yourself in the oven!)
Microwave	Danger	(Danger Mouse in the microwave in mortal peril!)
Sink	Tidal wave	(Surfing on the tidal wave in the sink)
Bin	Ash	(Ignore the notice and put hot ashes in the bin)

MAPPING

Mapping is a brilliant way of organising your thoughts.

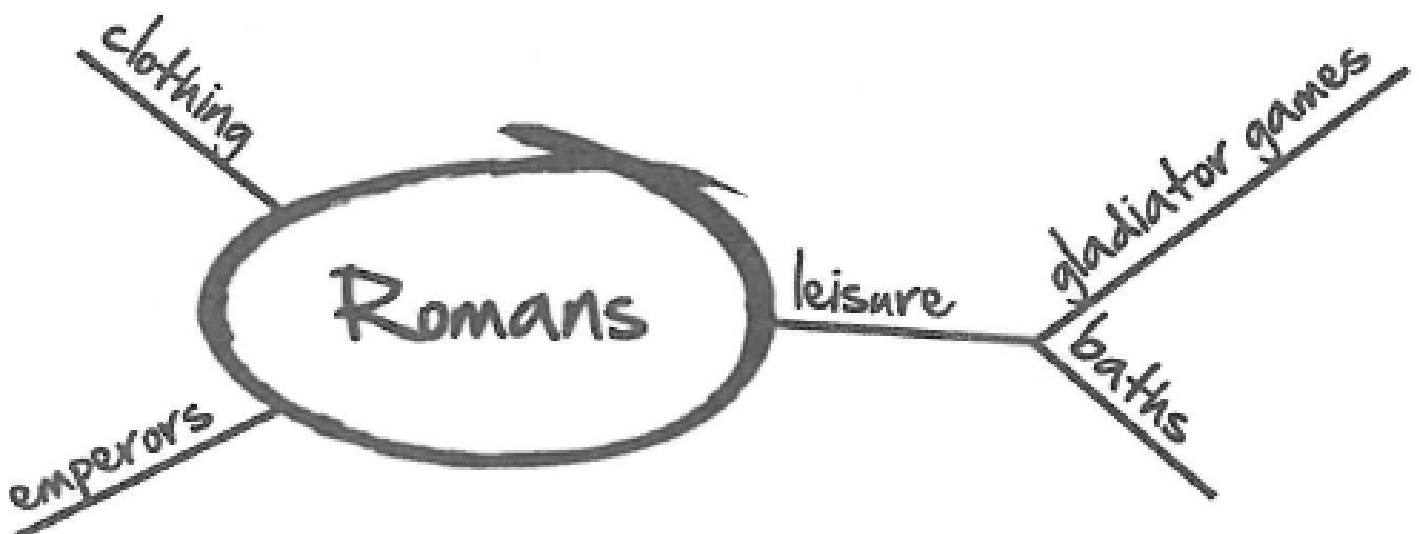
It can help you with:

- note taking during lessons when summarising text
- explaining complex ideas
- problem-solving, helping you to see all the issues and how they relate to each other
- planning, helping you get all the relevant information down and to organise it more easily (particularly useful for essays)
- revision, serving as a quick and efficient means of recalling information.

Mapping is a powerful way to remember topic words and facts



It can be used to help you remember information ranging from the history of the second World War to why Macbeth committed murder, or the food chain. It is particularly suited to visual learners.



"You have to be unique, and different, and shine in your own way."

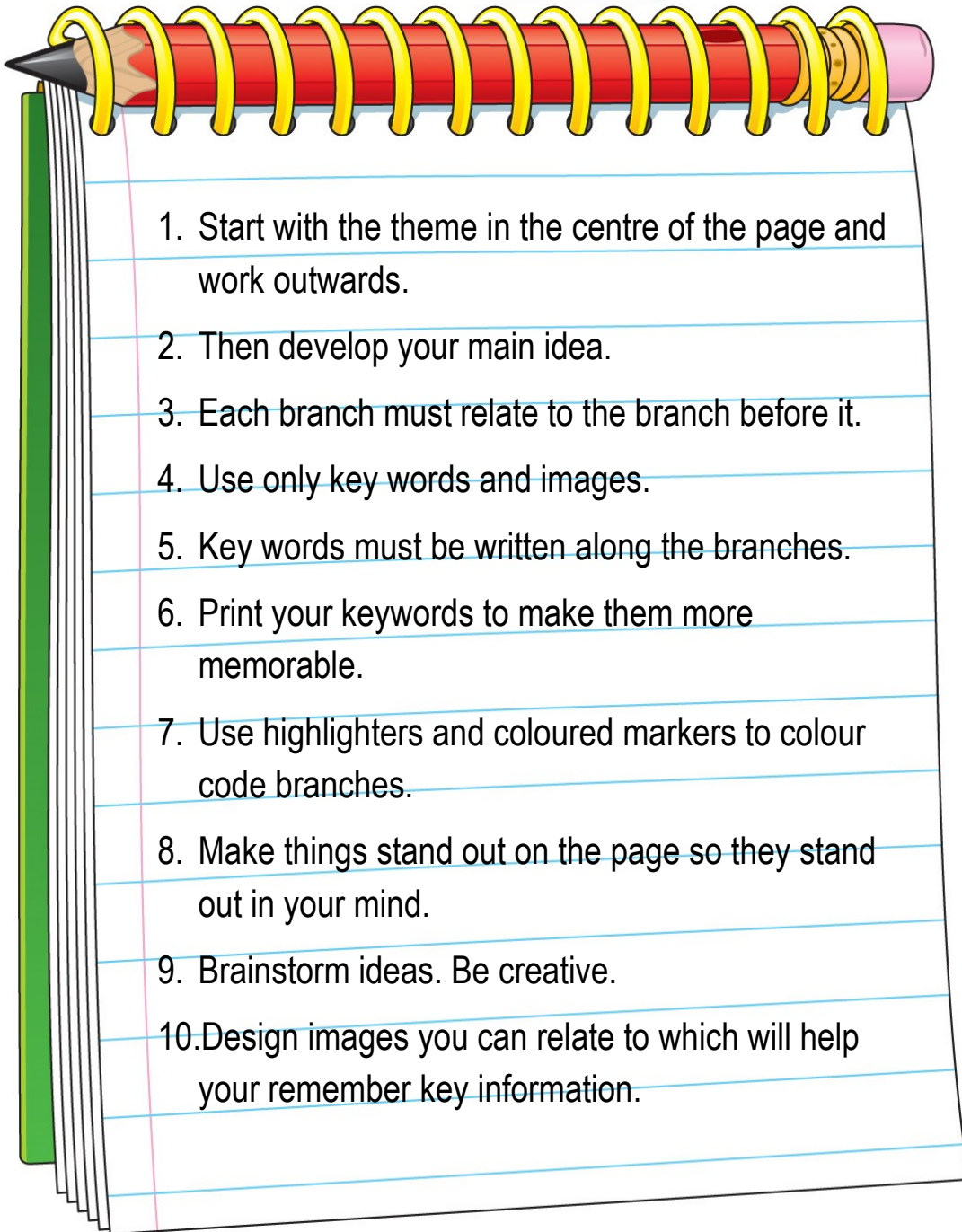
Lady Gaga, American recording artist

TOP 10 TIPS ON MAPPING

Mapping is also a brilliant way of helping you with college courses, sixth form, and university.

You can put lots of data on the page about a topic and your brain can fast track remembering the information.

Learn the mapping techniques below as used by the cleverest man on the planet,
Albert Einstein



"You have to be unique, and different, and shine in your own way."

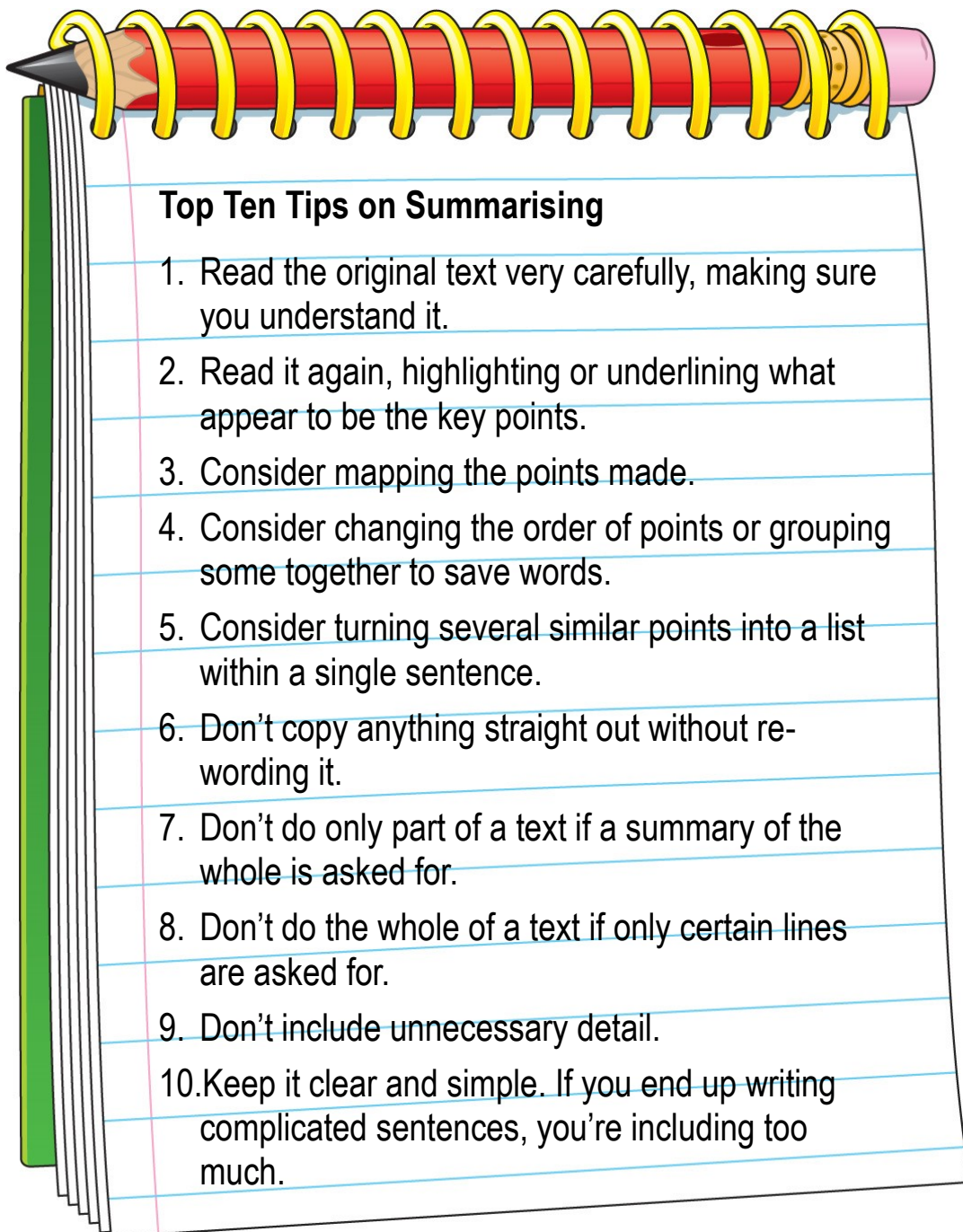
Peter Jones, entrepreneur and businessman

SUMMARISING

The aim is to reduce the key points of an article (or other text) to the smallest number of words, without losing any of the key points made. A good summary will reduce the length of the text to about 20% to 40% of its original size.

Summarising your study notes will help you revise more effectively.

When you make a summary of an essay you have written, a book you have read, or a set of notes you have taken, the summary is easier for you to use when you want to revise and remember it.



"It always seems impossible until it's done."

Nelson Mandela, political prisoner and former president of South Africa

BULLET POINTS

- Simple way of remembering key facts
- Read text, highlight key words and facts
- Single out each point with a "bullet"
- Effective method of revision

Bullet points are a great way of fast tracking the key points of your notes into your brain

Example 1 - Human Body

Many people don't realise that the human body, from the time when modern man first evolved millions of years ago right up to the present day, consists of 206 bones.

Doctors who specialise in learning about the human skeleton train for many years to become experts in this field and have to pass a number of complicated exams.

The main organs in the human body are lungs, heart, liver and kidneys. Modern science has enabled surgeons to find out more about the way these organs work than ever before.

Scientists have now established that the human body is a collection of more than 50,000 million cells. Research continues at universities around the world into the working of the human body.

Example 1 Answer

Human Body

- Body has 206 bones
- Main organs: lungs, heart, liver, kidneys
- Body has over 50,000 million living cells

"The big secret in life is that there is no big secret. Whatever your goal, you can get it if you are willing to work."

Oprah Winfrey, American talk show host

NOTE-TAKING

Top 10 Tips on Note-taking

1. Good notes can mean the difference between failing and passing. If you have mastered the "art of taking notes" you will have a tremendous advantage when sitting exams.
2. Make the most of the lesson, even if it seems boring. This is your only real chance to ask questions and clarify information.
3. If you can, sit near the front. You will find it easier to concentrate and understand what's going on.
4. Use looseleaf (preferred) or multiple section notebook. With a looseleaf book you can add handouts to your notes at appropriate spots. Keep all notes and material from each course together.
5. Start each day on a new page with the date and the topic being discussed at the top.
6. Prepare for your lesson before you arrive. Review yesterday's notes just prior to class in order to get "tuned in" to the material.
7. Listen! Be sure you understand what is being said. Concentrate on the lesson as you can't get important points down whilst thinking about last night's TV.
8. Remember you are there to take notes not dictation, so be brief, but be sure to get the main ideas.
9. Use understandable, consistent abbreviations. P - page, sc - chapter, eg - for example, # - number, vs - versus
10. There are some things you should always write down: names, dates, significant events, repeatedly stressed points (if repeated three times, you can bet on it being in the exam), formulas, charts, drawings, lists etc. Review your notes as soon after class as possible, but definitely within 24 hours.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

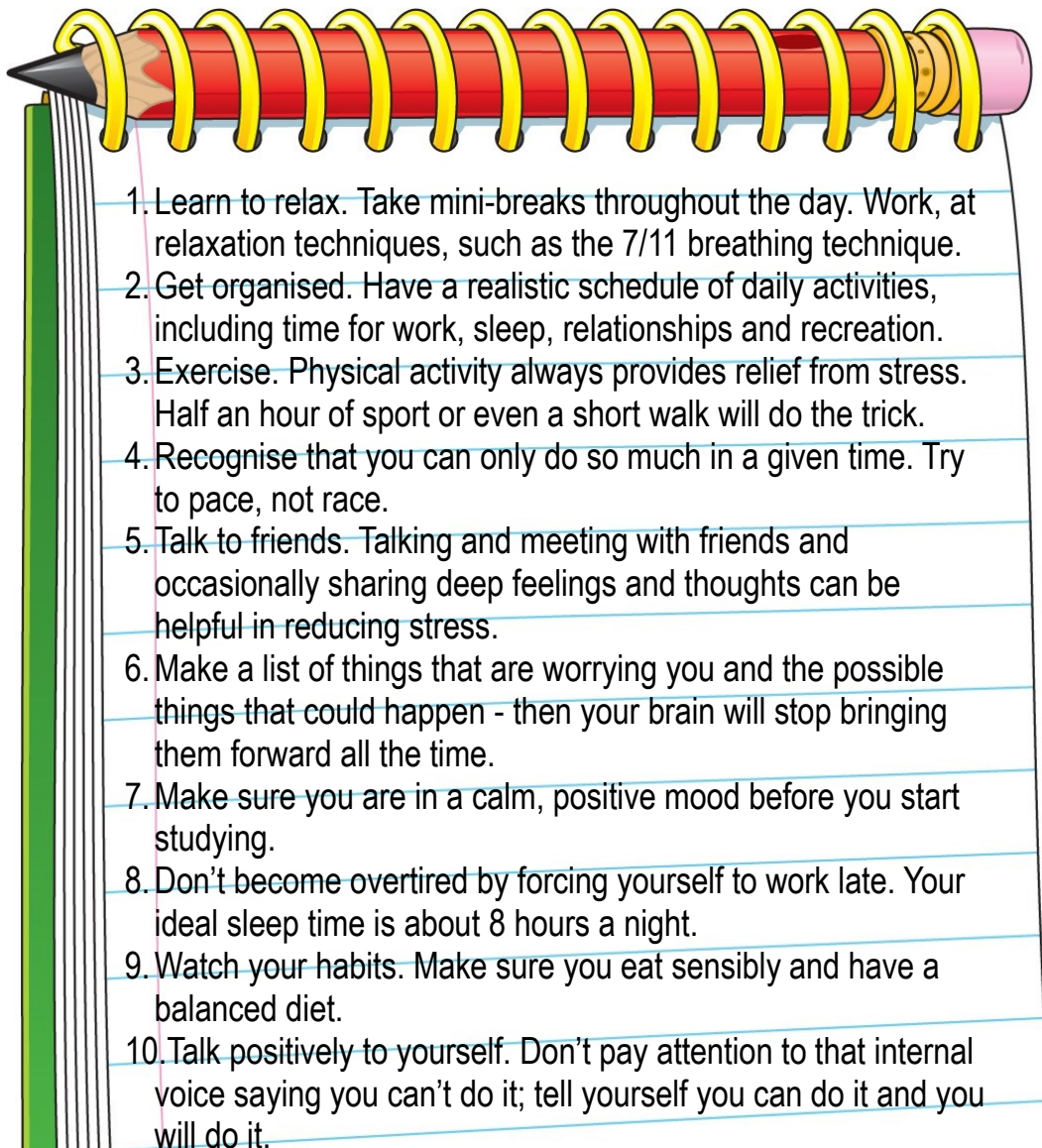
Stress is a very natural and important part of life. We all need stress but not too much or for too long. Stress helps keep us alert, motivates us to face challenges, and drives us to solve problems.

However, distress, on the other hand, results when our bodies over-react to events, leading to a "fight or flight" reaction. If we think something is scary or worrisome, our bodies react accordingly.

Have you ever had to give a talk to your class and found that your heart pounded so loudly and your mouth was so dry that you thought you just couldn't do it? Or sat in an exam, and just blanked out?



Top Ten Tips on Stress Management



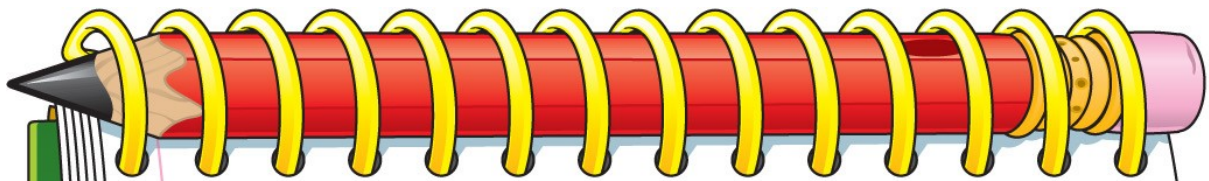
"The final forming of a person's character lies in their own hands."

Anne Frank, diarist and holocaust victim

TIME MANAGEMENT

Managing your time will help you become more effective and successful in the way you run your life.

It's a good idea to get in the habit of listing all your tasks on a daily and weekly basis - both what you have to do and also what you want to do. Some will be in your control and some won't.



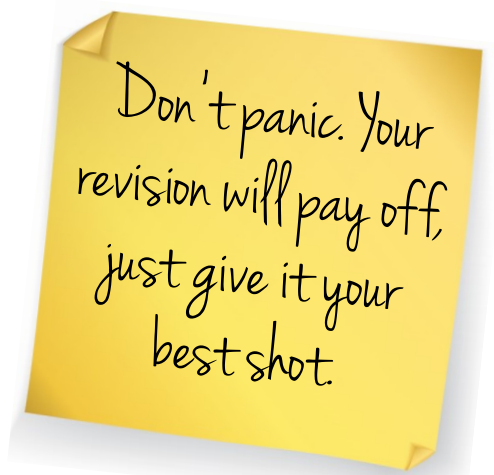
Top 10 Tips on Time Management

1. Make your timetable well in advance and be realistic, particularly as to how long tasks will take.
2. Mixing difficult tasks with easier ones will help you to keep your timetable. Place difficult tasks in the "best" slots.
3. Have deadlines and stick to them. Don't set deadlines you cannot meet.
4. When you start a piece of work, try and finish it at the time. Otherwise you will waste time when you restart, trying to work out where you were and what you were going to do next.
5. Don't put off tasks that you don't want to do.
6. Do put off dealing with things that are unimportant.
7. If possible, share tasks or use the expertise of others who can help.
8. Analyse the interruptions you experience during the day and learn to say "no" without feeling guilty.
9. Break down your work into manageable chunks.
10. Review your "free time", eg, if you travel by bus or train, could you use the time to read notes ...

EXAM PREPARATION

In the days leading up to the exams:

- find out exactly when, where and how long each exam is
- find out which topics are covered in paper 1 and which are in paper 2
- find out whether any of your exams clash, and how it can be resolved
- find out what the shortest papers are and what are the longest
- check that you have everything you need - pens, pencils, calculator, etc.



In the exam:

- listen to the invigilator/examiner
- read the instructions very carefully. Marks are often thrown away because students don't do what they are asked to do
- choose your questions carefully, never miss out a major mark question
- keep an eye on the time. Make sure you don't spend too long on one question; you need to allocate the time carefully
- if you finish early you will not be allowed, to leave until the exam is finished
- if you are caught gesticulating to another student you'll be disqualified
- absolutely no mobile phones are allowed in the exam hall
- check the school's policy on uniform for exams as well as the school's food and drink policy
- you are not allowed to sit where you want. You will be given a candidate or student number. If you need to go to the toilet you will be escorted
- if you're 15-30 minutes late you won't be allowed in and if you don't turn up for the exam there is no second chance. If you are in hospital you can still do the exam there
- the papers are marked by external markers. If you require project or coursework back ask your school, it is only available from November.

"Education is the reason I am here. I loved getting As, I liked being smart, being on time and getting my work done. I thought being smart was the coolest thing in the world."

Michelle Obama, African American First Lady of the USA

Revision Websites

BBC Bitesize GCSE: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/>

English Literature: http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/english_literature/
www.mrswhelan.com
www.englishbiz.co.uk
www.s-cool.co.uk
www.geoffbarton.co.uk
www.universalteacher.org.uk

Mrs Whelan YouTube

www.davidcrystal.com

English Language: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/english/>

Drama: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/drama/>

Geography: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/geography/>

History: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/history/>

<http://www.mrallsophistory.com/revision/>

<http://www.schoolhistory.co.uk/revision/>

<http://www.activehistory.co.uk/miscellaneous/menus/GCSE/gcse-history-menu.htm>

www.spartacus-educational.com

Religious Studies: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/rs/>

German: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/german/>

Duolingo (new interactive website and phone app)

French: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/french/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/french/mafrance/>

<http://julieprof.blogspot.co.uk/p/politique.html>

Maths: ccwmaths.wordpress.com

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/maths/>

Past papers free download from Edexcel website for GCSE Maths syllabus A

<http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse10/maths/maths-a/Pages/default.aspx>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/>

<http://www.mymaths.co.uk/>

Mymaths.co.uk

Science:

Year 10: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/science/21c/>

Year 11: http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/science/add_ocr_21c/

Triple Science students will need both of the above and the following for the Unit 7s:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/science/triple_ocr_21c/

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/subjects/zrkw2hv>

Remember to select the OCR 21st Century exam board.

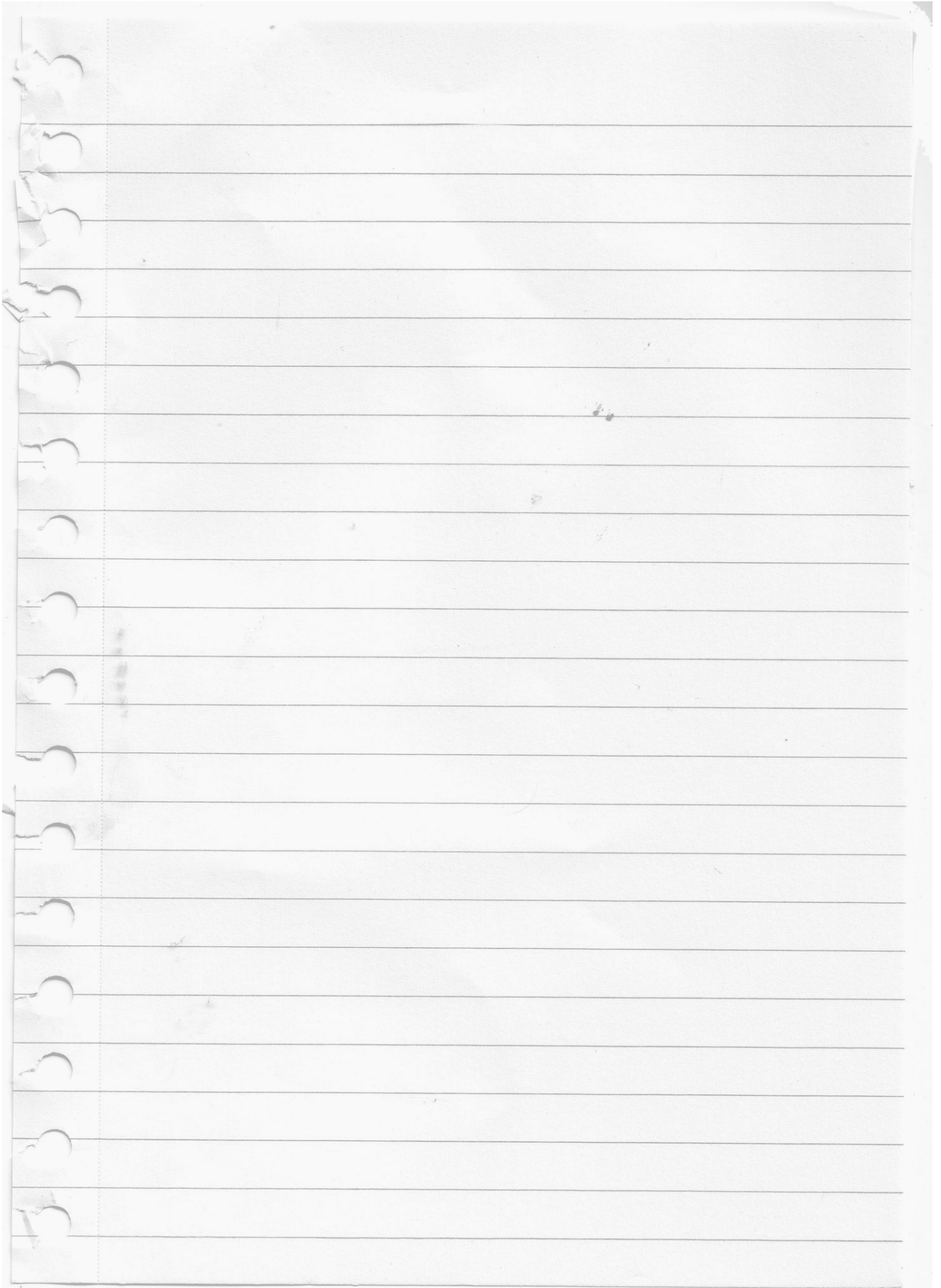
Music: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/music/>

Art & Design: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/art/>

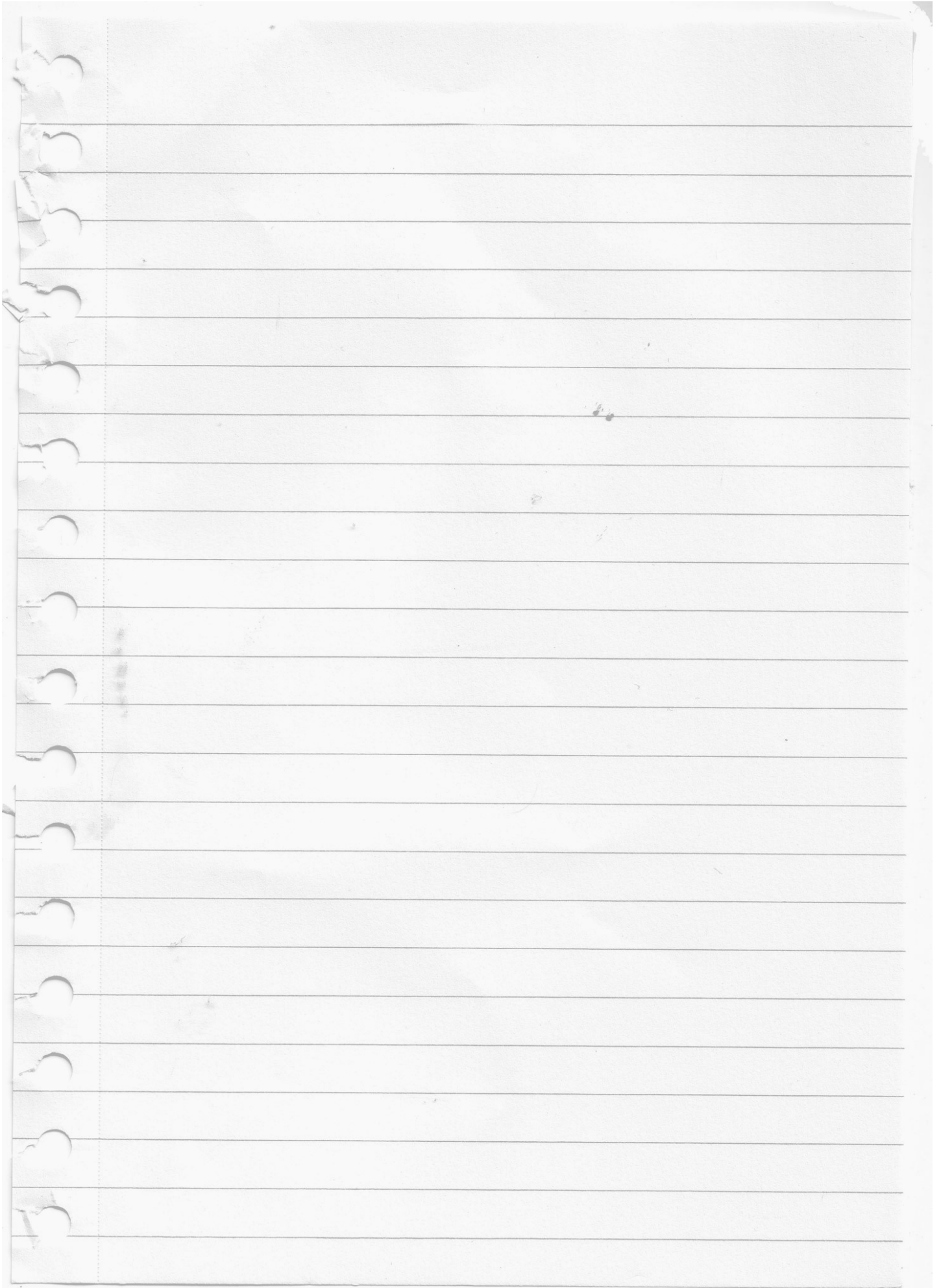
ICT: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/ict/>

Physical Education: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/pe/>

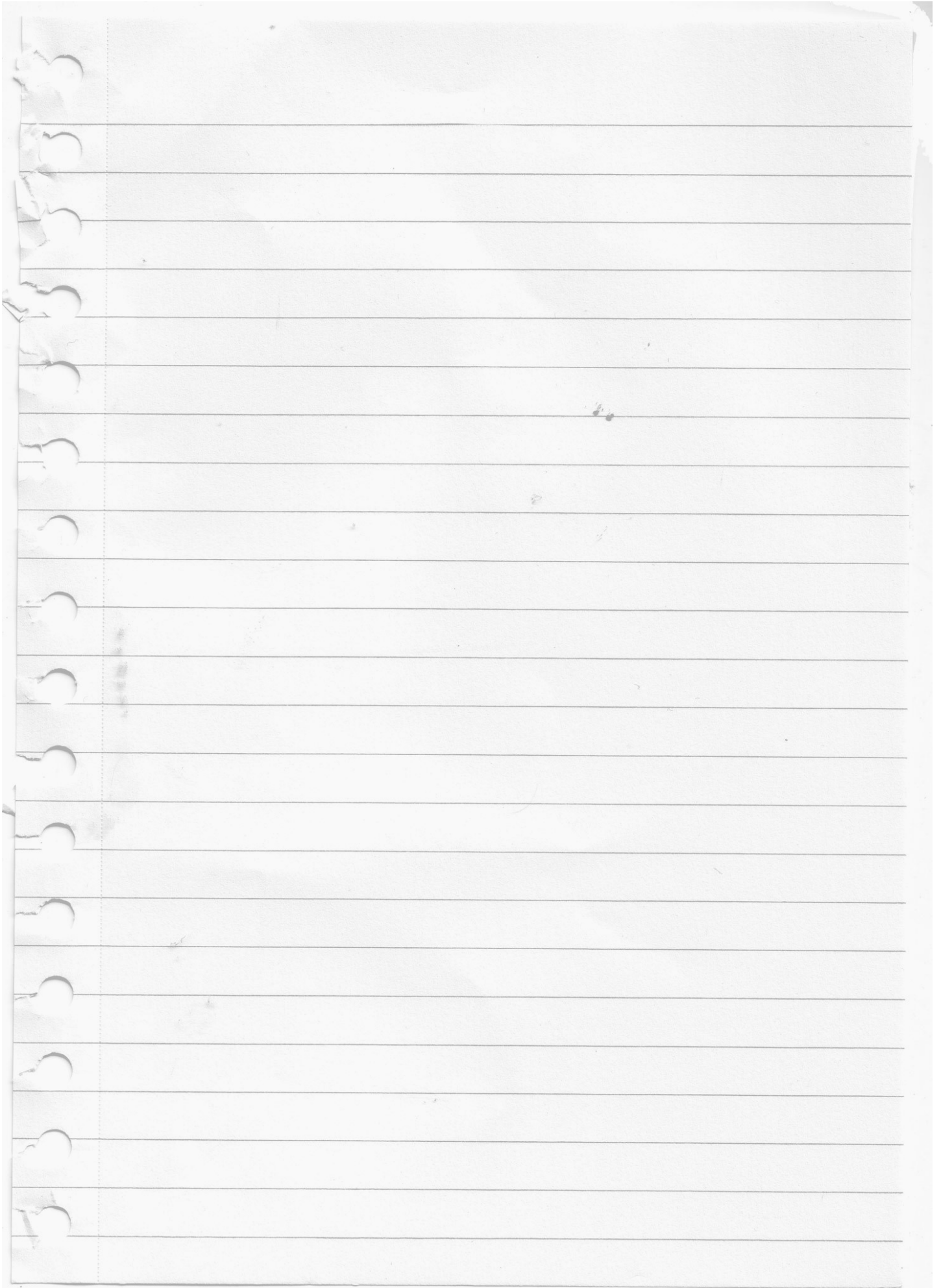
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