Exam/Study Tip # 37: Creating Effective Exam Study Timetables (Part 2)

Revising or re-learning materials in preparation of the exams involves 3 key steps.

Step 1 Understanding and committing information to memory. **[Learning/Relearning Phase]**

Step 2 Engraining information into long-term memory. **[Engraining Phase]**

If the materials are new or difficult, the engraining process should be conducted within 24 hours of Step 1. Otherwise, materials can be engrained within 3 days of Step 1.

Step 3 Revise materials the week after Step 1 was executed. **[Revision Phase]**

The below timetable illustrates how to revise/re-learn 1 set of notes or 1 topic each weekday, across 1 fortnight (i.e. revise/re-learn 10 sets of notes or 10 topics in total).

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Learn Set 1	Learn Set 2 Engrain Set 1	Learn Set 3 Engrain Set 2	Learn Set 4 Engrain Set 3	Learn Set 5 Engrain Set 4	Engrain Set 5	

Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	Day 11	Day 12	Day 13	Day 14
Learn Set 6 Revise Set 1	Learn Set 7 Engrain Set 6 Revise Set 2	Learn Set 8 Engrain Set 7 Revise Set 3	Learn Set 9 Engrain Set 8 Revise Set 4	Learn Set 10 Engrain Set 9 Revise Set 5	Engrain Set 10	

Day 15	Day 16	Day 17	Day 18	Day 19	Day 20	Day 21
Revise Set 6	Revise Set 7	Revise Set 8	Revise Set 9	Revise Set 10		

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Step 1 = The Learning/Relearning Phase

Choose a set of notes from your primary source (say Set 1) and take the time to understand the topic before you start committing materials to long-term memory.

Those students attending our **Exam Revision Lectures** will receive a highly comprehensive set of notes from which to learn – so please **do not** waste time preparing your own notes or summaries. Use your text books and summary notes to learn from, and then use our lecture materials to fill in gaps in knowledge and extend on concepts taught at school

Method:

1. Read through all the major headings and subheadings so that information can be subconsciously linked as it's being committed to memory.

2. Read through a small section of the notes **slowly** and **out loud**. Take the time to **understand** the materials you will be committing to memory. In this way, you'll gain an appreciation as to how each section/concept links up to the others – which assists in knowledge retention and in the development of application skills.

3. Vocalise what you have learned in your own words i.e. Relay what you have just read to your dog, cat or imaginary friend!

   Note:

   If the materials you're re-learning/revising are difficult – address materials one sentence at a time i.e. Read the first sentence out loud, then re-phrase what you've just read in your own words, and out loud. Then tackle the next sentence etc.

   If the materials you're re-learning/revising are easy, address materials one paragraph at a time.

4. Highlight key words, important concepts and those sections that require additional attention using a **YELLOW HIGHLIGHTER.** For example:

> When radiation from the hollow cathode lamp enters the flame, some of it is absorbed by the ground state metal atoms. The metal atoms absorb the wavelengths of radiation (from the light source) that are needed for the **outer** electrons to move to higher energy levels. The greater the concentration of metal atoms, the greater the amount of radiation absorbed.
>
> i.e. Absorbance $\propto$ Concentration

5. If you must write your own notes or summaries wait until the highlighting process has been completed. This will save you valuable time.

6. Use the remaining time to work through examination-style questions that are accompanied by fully worked solutions.

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Step 2 = The Engraining Phase

To keep what we have learned/revised in long-term memory, we need to engrain materials as soon as possible after Step 1 has been executed, and preferably within 24 hours of learning/relearning.

If materials are well learned **and/or** well understood **and/or** of great interest, it's not crucial to conduct the engraining process with 24 hours. However, as the amount we remember decreases each day, it will take you longer to revise materials the longer you delay. Therefore, conduct the engraining process as soon as you can!

How long do we need to spend engraining materials?

Spend 10 minutes per learning hour engraining materials. **For example:** If you spent 4 hours learning materials the previous night, dedicate 40 minutes to revising these materials when executing Step 2.

Method:

1. Read through the **YELLOW HIGHLIGHTED** regions from Set 1 **out loud.**

2. Re-phrase what you've just read in your own words – and out loud.

   When you come across a difficult section that you don't fully understand, read the sections that haven't been highlighted **out loud**. This will help you to fill in "knowledge gaps" and strengthen weak areas.

3. Highlight the difficult and/or important sections using an **ORANGE HIGHLIGHTER**. For example:

> When radiation from the hollow cathode lamp enters the flame, some of it is absorbed by the ground state metal atoms. The metal atoms absorb the wavelengths of radiation (from the light source) that are needed for the **outer** electrons to move to higher energy levels. The greater the concentration of metal atoms, the greater the amount of radiation absorbed.
>
> i.e. Absorbance $\propto$ Concentration

4. Use the remaining time to work through examination-style questions.

Step 3 = The Revision Phase

To ensure that you don't forget the materials committed to memory, revise materials on a regular basis.

Revise each set of notes by reading the **ORANGE HIGHLIGHTED** sections and rephrasing materials out loud. Then highlight the difficult and important sections using a **GREEN HIGHLIGHTER**. For example:

> When radiation from the hollow cathode lamp enters the flame, some of it is absorbed by the ground state metal atoms. The metal atoms absorb the wavelengths of radiation (from the light source) that are needed for the **outer** electrons to move to higher energy levels. The greater the concentration of metal atoms, the greater the amount of radiation absorbed.
>
> i.e. Absorbance $\propto$ Concentration

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How long do we need to spend revising materials?

Spend 5 minutes per initial learning hour revising materials. **For example:** If you spent 4 hours initially learning a set of notes in Step 1, spend at least 20 minutes revising these materials when executing Step 3.

Use the remaining time to work through examination-style questions.

Before the Exams

If a topic is new or difficult, revise the **GREEN** highlighted sections **ONCE** during the week leading up to the exams.

Good luck with your exam preparations!
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