The sooner you start, the better

Regardless of the approach you use, the sooner you start the better.

**1. Establish what you need to know for the exam**

You may or may not have covered topics that you are not required to know for the exam. Ask your teacher to discuss the course specification with you.

**2. Collect revision material**

This includes all the notes and handouts from teachers and any notes you have made yourself. If any books were used in class (i.e. set texts for Eng Lit, Drama, Welsh Lit etc.), see if you can get hold of a copy from your library. Make sure you have caught up on any lessons you have missed (ask teachers and friends).

Make sure that you're aware of the formulae and other information that are given to you as part of the examination paper in some subjects - these are for your reference so that you can concentrate on knowing how to use them rather than having to remember them. There may of course be other formulae that you do need to memorise, and you should check these out with your teacher or lecturer.

**3. Gather stationery**

For those of us not fortunate enough to possess a photographic memory, at some stage we need to write down some notes. Where possible, get hold of some lined or blank paper and some coloured pens. Make revision as entertaining as possible. Activities that are entertaining stick in our memory and this is exactly what we are trying to achieve in order to gain good results.

**4. Get hold of an exam timetable**

Every pupil has a personal timetable generated of their exams that they should obtain through their school/college. Alternatively the WJEC timetable and a consolidated timetable of examinations from all the boards, can be viewed online.

**5. Draw up a revision plan**

Only you can decide how much time you need to spend on each task. Calculate how many days you have left before your exams and plan enough time to revise each subject.

**6. Where to Revise?**

This is where approaches will differ to suit individual preferences and the requirements defined by individual schools and colleges. Make sure that you're aware of your school or colleges' policy concerning study leave during examination periods as some will require pupils to attend revision classes whilst others allow pupils to revise at home.

In either instance, you will at some stage, need to revise outside school hours and some people will prefer to work in silence and others with music. Some will prefer to work alone and others in a group. Only you can decide what works best for you. Below are a few suggestions. You may choose one, none or a combination:

* Music in the background or quiet
* Sociable or on your own
* Bedroom desk or dining table at home
* Library or mate's house
* Different places for variety
* Internet Access (for revision purposes only)

If you choose to revise in a group, don't assume everything your friends say is true. Ask your teacher to confirm any queries you have. Also, don't feel pressurised to work in a group, do what's best for you - you're the one who'll be taking the exam.

**7. Time to begin**

Now that you have collected all your revision material and chosen a location, the only thing left is to revise. This again comes down to personal preference as different approaches work for different people. Here are some methods of revision:

* Make notes on all work carried out in class and any other supporting material, or condense existing notes
* Make flash cards or key points, setting out important dates or things you have problems remembering
* Make brightly coloured wall charts
* Don't overload, plan regular breaks. Working for hours on end becomes counter-productive and you won't be able to retain what you have covered. Lots of shorter revision periods are more beneficial than one longer period.
* Re-visit work that is naturally difficult for you. The saying 'practice makes perfect' is true.
You can always test and trial a few methods and then choose the method which appears to be most effective for you.

**8. Past Papers**

A great form of revision. Try to obtain as many as you can in order to give yourself a broad view of the possible format of questions. After a few attempts, try a paper under test conditions without notes, to obtain a true indication of how well your revision is going. Don't get disheartened if you can't answer all the questions. This is the time to make mistakes, which can be resolved with hard work.
NB: Compare past papers to the current specifications as some questions may be out of date

**9. Ask Your Teacher**

If at any stage during your revision you come unstuck on a particular topic, contact your teacher. Remember, it is never too late. Don't feel afraid to ask a teacher for help up to the day before an exam even if they may have a go at you for not sorting it out sooner!

**10. Healthy Body Equals Healthy Mind**

Avoid drinks with high levels of caffeine such as tea, coffee and fizzy drinks. Ensure you have the recommended 8 glasses of water a day as this can prevent dehydration and raise concentration levels. Eat healthy foods. Get plenty of sleep to help you focus and concentrate.

**11. Stay Positive**

Revision can be a depressing and stressful time. You may have periods when you become overwhelmed with how much you have to learn, put pressure on yourself to succeed or become disheartened from talking to last years students who struggled with the exam. Reassure yourself of the following things to stay positive:

* How good it will feel when all your exams are over
* How pleased you will feel when you get good grades
* Recognise your growing depth of subject knowledge
* Give yourself incentives, for example, go to the cinema or socialise with friends after a good revision session
* Short term sacrifices will bring long term benefits

**12. Keep a Grasp on Reality**

In the build up to an important exam session, the exams are the single most important thing in your life but it is important you don't lose sight of reality. Allow yourself time to do things that are normally important to you:

* Spend time with friends or family
* Play sports and go training or play music and practise
* Keep healthy
* Spend time with your pets (take your dog for a walk, feed the fish)

**13. Organise Stationery**

Consult your teacher, check past papers and clarify what you can and cannot take into the exam (e.g. Calculator, Set Texts...). Make sure you have a spare pen and pencil in case of an emergency.

**14. Plan the day**

In order to avoid any last minute stress, plan the exam day down to the very last detail.
NB: It may be an idea to avoid discussing the exam with class mates after arriving at the examination venue. Talking about the exam immediately beforehand can cause unnecessary stress that can easily be avoided by choosing other topics of conversation or finding somewhere quiet to gather your thoughts alone.

**15. Last minute preparations**

Do not attempt to learn new topics on the day of your exam, instead revisit and re-fresh topics you have already covered. Familiarise yourself with key points, key dates, formulae or essay plans etc.