

STEP TWO:

Find a Focus

Identify what you need to know for the exams. Get this information from:

1. Asking your teacher

As obvious as it may seem, your teacher has read the GCSE/A level syllabus that you have followed and based her/his teaching on this!

You should have covered all the areas of the syllabus, however, due to time constraints, regular teacher absence, etc... you may find that you have received a stronger grounding in some areas of the syllabus than others. Check if this is the case! You may also have followed a syllabus in which there is a certain amount of choice in the topics you have studied. Make sure you are fully aware of the topics your teacher opted to choose to teach you and only revise and answer questions on those topics.

2. Your course notes

The work you have done in your exercise books/files in class and for homework over the period of the course (usually two years), is a pretty good indication of the material you will need to revise for your exams. Make sure that you haven't got too many absences e.g. due to holidays or illness etc... during term time, which will create blank spots in this 'body of knowledge.' Ask a friend if you can photocopy their notes to make up for any notes you are missing.

In addition to your own notes, many courses are taught from a set text book, which you will have used often in class. If you are unable to take this home, see if you can buy a copy from one of the major high street bookshops (WH Smiths stock many school text books). In addition to this, there are many revision guides on the market, the *Letts* guides being probably the most well known.

An additional source of useful revision notes and practice questions, if you have access to the INTERNET, can be found on one of the many revision sites online, some of which I have listed below:

- www.bbc.co.uk/education/gcsebitesize/
- www.freeserve.net/education/examrevision
- www.projectgcse.co.uk
- www.quia.com

- www.s-cool.co.uk
- www.revise.it/reviseit/
- www.homeworkhigh.com
- www.learn.co.uk
- www.lineone.net/learning/revision201.html

3. Past papers

Read as many past papers as you can, going back five to seven years from the date when you will sit your exam. You will notice trends in the type of questions that are asked and also the frequency at which question types are repeated. For example:

In 1996, 1998, and 2000 they asked a question on: *how the Treaty of Versailles helped to create the conditions for Hitler's rise to power*. This might mean you're due a similar question in 2002.

Looking at past papers helps you to know how the examiners mind works and what they expect you to know and write about.

The more familiar you can become with the 'geography' (layout etc...) and content of past question papers, the less frightening and unfamiliar they will seem on the day of the exam.

Most school departments keep copies of past papers, if they can't afford to let their personal copies out of their sight (they're usually used to set mock exam questions and end of year tests) offer to pay to have them photocopied so that you may take your own copy away.

4. The exam syllabus

Again, you may be able to get hold of a syllabus from your teacher, but if you can't, you could always contact the exam board direct (addresses provided below). Alternatively, you can log onto the exam boards individual websites and read or download copies of the syllabus you need:

<u>Exam board</u>	<u>Address & telephone number</u>	<u>Website</u>
Northern Examinations and Assessment Board (NEAB)	12 Harter Street, Manchester, M1 6H7. Tel - 0161 953 1180	www.neab.ac.uk
Edexcel Foundation (London Examinations)	Stewart House, 32 Russell Sq, London, WC1B 5DN. Tel – 0207 331 4000	www.edexcel.org.uk

Assessment
Qualifications
Alliance
(formerly the AEB)

Stag Hill House, Guilford,
Surrey. GU2 5XJ.
Tel – 01483 506506

www.aqa.org.uk

OCR/Midlands
Examining Group

Syndicate Buildings, 1 Hills Road,
Cambridge. CB1 2EU.
Tel – 01223 553311

www.ocr.org.uk