

General preparation for AQA GCSE Science

Key words

Use the online textbook or revision guide to find key words – these are usually in the Glossary or highlighted in **bold** type.

Ask your child what a key word means and ask them to put it in a context to help you to understand the word.

Science issues

Start a discussion or debate or even just ask your child to explain what they think about a current affairs issue that relates to science. Get them to discuss the science behind their opinions and explain why we need to think about these issues.

Ideas could include:

Should we be allowed to have “designer” babies?

Is cloning plants and animals the best way to reduce world famine?

What is the Greenhouse effect? And what impact will it have on our lives?

Are electric cars really more eco-friendly than petrol/diesel cars?

What’s beyond our solar system and is there life elsewhere in the universe?

How do we produce our electricity and which is the most sustainable method?

Look through the online textbook and revision guides to get sources of inspiration.

Tassomai

Year 11 students have access to the online individual tailored revision site. This gives them lots of questions to work through in small regular sessions. The Tassomai resource works best if it is used for a short amount of time daily. Tassomai tests their knowledge and goes over the same points repeatedly until they have shown to have got that section of the specification correct 3 times. The class teacher can monitor progress and show students where their areas of weakness are as this is then the focus for revision and further help.

Please encourage your child to use Tassomai regularly and show you how it works.

www.Tassomai.com

Log on is their school email address

Eg. Joe Smith SmithJ.14@sbeschool.org.uk

Passwords have been set by the students. If they have forgotten their password, they can go through the password retrieval process which sends them an email to allow them to reset it or ask their teacher to reset it.

Using revision materials on Moodle and our online textbook

The science department have had online access to the text books we use at GCSE. This is to allow students complete access to all material whilst away from school. This can be accessed from the Collins publishers website www.connect.collins.co.uk

How to tackle 6 mark science questions

The question normally looks quite wordy. Some questions will include pictures or diagrams. It is vital that the students read **ALL** this information fully.

All of AQA's exam papers have the same format, so the exam paper that the students sit will look the same as any practice papers that they've completed. This makes past paper practice essential. At least this means they won't get a nasty surprise when they sit the exam for real.

The perfect 6 mark answer includes:

- Sound knowledge and understanding of the subject area
- Logical presentation of the information
- Good spelling, punctuation and grammar
- A wide range of specialist terms correctly used
- Covering both advantages and disadvantages if necessary
- Use of all the information supplied to inform their answer

This is where discussing science ideas and principles really helps students to link ideas and think about different factors and aspects involved.

Plan the key points before they start to write.

The process is similar to the one used in English and History for writing essay's; PEE (point, explain, evaluate)

Point – what is the key point

Explain – Explain what the point means, how it works, what **effect** it has

Evaluate – Why is this point important, what **affect** does it have.

Look at the command words, do they need to state advantages and disadvantages or compare and contrast or just state.

Required Practical's

Students have a number of practical's that they have had to carry out or observe during the science course. Knowledge of these practicals are assessed in the exams. Questions can focus on:

The equipment and the method used.

Results obtained and the displaying of data (graph work) or the analysis of data including calculations where necessary.

Evaluation of the method with suggestions on how to improve the data.

The science theory behind the results and/or observations.

Past paper practice

The best way to get exam ready is to complete as many past papers as possible. This will give a good understanding of how the paper is set out and the types of questions they are likely to get. Similar questions come up year after year. The science course is brand new with only specimen papers available. It is vital to look at older (legacy) papers as the layout and style of question are the same. The common mistakes students make are:

- Not actually reading the whole question - the answers or helpful bits of information can often be found if the student reads the question properly.
- Not looking at how many marks are awarded for a question – 2 marks means 2 points need to be made, 3 marks means 3 points etc.
- Not following the instructions – questions often ask to tick 2 boxes or underline 3 words. Students often only do one tick or underline
- Missing out questions – If a question has an introductory section and looks wordy and long they may miss the first part of the questions as it looks like it is part of the background science information

Go through a past paper with your child and point out these common errors.

Step by step guide to past paper revision

You will need the correct tier paper and the mark scheme – these can be obtained from Moodle or the AQA website

- 1) Read the whole paper through first.
- 2) Chose one question – read that question again
- 3) Re-read the same question but this time highlight or underline the key words or information
- 4) Have some thinking time – ensure you know what exactly the question is asking you to do, these are the command words (describe, compare, explain, state, draw, tick, calculate, etc.)
- 5) Have a go at the question.
- 6) Read through your answer.
- 7) Look at the mark scheme and mark your paper in a different colour
- 8) Look to see where you lost marks – what key points did the exam board need in order to get the mark. Write the correct answer on your paper in another colour pen.
- 9) Repeat with the next question until the paper is complete
- 10) Try the paper again a week later see if you have improved.

Make a list of the topics that you didn't do so well on and use these to focus your revision. Use the attached tally sheet to monitor where marks were lost, this will focus the mind so as not to make the same mistakes again and again.

Past paper practice: Tracking grid

Where I lost the marks	Test/ Exam (including date)				
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
1. I haven't read the question properly					
2.Misread instructions					
3.Inability to work with the knowledge, express opinion					
4.I did not understand the question					
5.I needed more time					
6.I spent too much time on a question					
7.I missed out questions on the paper					
8.I did not check to see how many marks a question was worth					
9.Questions I prepared for did not appear in the paper					
10.Poor writing style					
11.Not sure how to start or end a 6 mark Q					
12.I wrote too much or too little					
13.Writing illegibly					
14.Forgot to answer unanswered questions					
15.Failed to check my answers					

This process takes a long time at first but soon becomes quicker the more questions are practiced. If you have any questions or are unsure bring the paper in to school and ask one of the science teachers.

During past paper practice if a question comes up where your child cannot remember any of the science required, use that opportunity to look in the textbooks and revision guides and learn that section of work again.