

Effective Study Skills & Revision Techniques

Psychological research has repeatedly demonstrated that our memories for information learnt is not very reliable. For example, Ebbinghaus' forgetting curve shows that we will forget over 60% of what we have learnt after just one day.

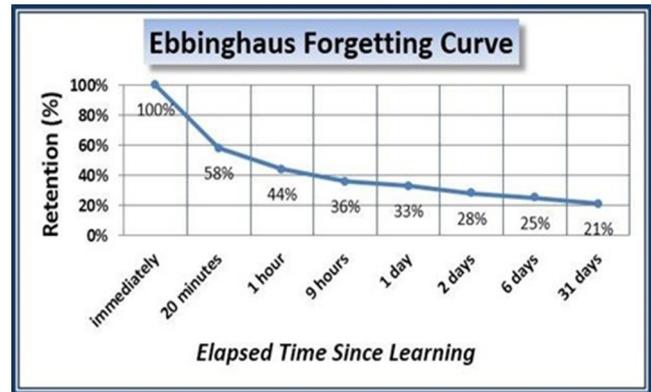
With the new linear exams and students sitting exams up to three years after learning material, it is vitally important that they *space learning over time* rather than 'cramming.' This ensures success in exams AND deeper, life-long learning.

How to help your child to study effectively

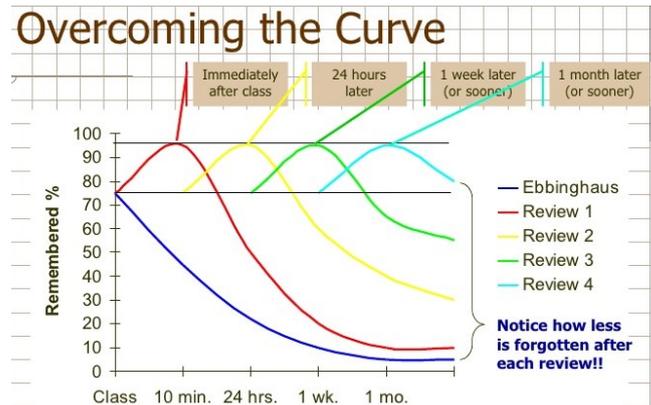
1. Help them to plan a study schedule and stick to it
Students need to get into the habit of reviewing their learning regularly. This doesn't need to be for long periods of time, but spending 20 minutes writing out key words on flashcards is a really effective strategy for spacing out learning and will ensure that revision materials are prepared and ready for the end of the year (this discourages cramming).

2. Encourage them to retrieve information regularly
To 'beat the forgetting curve' we need to regularly practise retrieving information from our memories. We can do this in several ways for example, completing quizzes, using flashcards, talking about a topic from memory, keyword tests, free recall. One way you can encourage your child to retrieve information is to ask them about their learning and see if they can explain key concepts without their notes. Anything they struggle with is an area for revision! You may also find that teachers are setting quizzes for homework—encourage your child to take these seriously and aim at getting 100% using the three attempts available. Students can also complete text book questions, questions in revision guides or online quizzes for extra retrieval practice. One excellent website is Quizlet where students can create flashcards for different subjects and topics and then play games to test themselves.

For a more detailed account and further information, visit the Learning Scientists blog— <http://www.learningscientists.org>



Cognitive research has shown that when we spread learning out over time (e.g. 6 half hour sessions) we actually learn more than when we study the same amount in one session (e.g. one 3 hour session).



3. Encourage your child to revisit old topics
As well as going over recently learnt information, it is also important to retrieve past learning. For example, you could encourage your child to make links between what they are currently learning with what they have learnt in previous topics from last week, last month or even last year. This encourages interleaving (going back and forth between ideas) which has been shown by research to improve our memories for information learnt.

4. Make sure your child gets enough sleep!
Sleep is so important for consolidating and reinforcing what has been learnt. The most effective strategies will not be as effective if a child is sleep deprived. The Sleep Foundation recommends that 14-17 year olds get approximately 8-10 hours sleep per night. You can help your child beat the forgetting curve by encouraging them to get a decent nights sleep!