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Dear Parents and Carers of Year 8 and 9 students

When I have visited Year 8 and Year 9 classes recently I have been impressed with the level of concentration and the amount of good quality work they are completing. In the week commencing Monday 13 February students in Year 7 to Year 10 will be taking their regular end of half term tests. Many students did well in their Autumn Term tests and we hope that they will do even better in the February cumulative tests. In all of the cumulative tests half of the marks are allocated for topics covered during the half term, and the other half are for topics covered previously. We are encouraging all students to actively revise for these tests.

As you are aware, there are a significant number of teachers who will be participating in the strike organised by the National Education Union (NEU) on Wednesday 1 February and therefore, students in Years 8, 9 and 11 will be working from home on this day. Teachers not participating in the strike will set lessons for this day for students to complete at home, which will be available on ePraise. In addition to completing these lessons, I would like to encourage students to use this time to revise for their cumulative tests, which are taking place from Monday 13 February to Friday 17 February. The content covered this term and this year is summarised on the curriculum pages of the school website which can be accessed by the link below.

<https://www.jmhs.hereford.sch.uk/curriculum/termly-curriculum-plans-by-subject/>

Alternatively, students can use their exercise books to revise.

How to revise?

It is vital to revise to revise actively - making notes, answering questions and summarising. Reading notes or a book and highlighting does not work and is a waste of time.

Using interactive learning sites such as BBC Bitesize or Oak Academy for the topics covered this term is a great way to revise:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/levels/z4kw2hv>
<https://classroom.thenational.academy/subjects-by-year>

Additionally, it is helpful for students to learn alternative active revision techniques. I have inserted below guidance on revision techniques from Miss Newnes (Head of Year 11) that we are teaching Year 11 students to use.

Cornell Notes

- Students should divide their page into four sections. One block at the top of the page, two columns in the centre and a block at the bottom of the page.
- In the top block, students should write the title of their topic.
- In the right-hand column, students should write their main notes about the topic. They should use a resource to aid them with this.
- In the left-hand column, students should create questions, which link to their main notes.
- In the bottom block, students should write a brief summary of the content on the page.
- Students should cover the right-hand column and answer the questions on the left, and revisit these questions over a period of time.

Memory Palaces and Journeys

The memory palace technique is about changing your memories into images placed in a familiar mental location. The idea is that you can mentally walk through your palace looking at your memories to recall them.

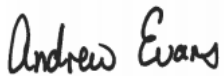
- For your first memory palace, try choosing a place that you know well, like your home or school.
- Plan out the whole route — for example: front door, shoe rack, bathroom, kitchen, living room, etc. Some people find that going clockwise is helpful, but it is not essential. Eventually, you will have many memory palaces. You will also be able to revise the memory palace after you test it a few times, so do not worry if it is not perfect on the first try.
- Now take a list of something that you want to memorize.
- Take one or two items at a time and place a mental image of them in each location of your memory palace. Try to exaggerate the images of the items and have them interact with the location. For example, if the first item is “carrots” and the first location in your memory palace is the front door, picture some giant carrots opening up your front door.
- Make the memory images come alive with your senses. Exaggeration of the images and humour can help.

Revision Cards

- Students should write a word/question on one side.
- On the other side students should write the definition/answer.
- Students should test themselves before they turn the card over.
- They should put the ‘don’t knows’ into a separate pile.
- Students should go back to the ‘don’t know’ pile.
- They should then re-test themselves twice.
- If they still don’t know the answers/definitions then they should go back to their books and read again.
- Students should then re-test themselves 1 or 2 days later.

I would like to thank all parents and carers for supporting your children and helping them to achieve success in school.

With my very best wishes



Andrew Evans
Headteacher