How to revise using Colour

Colour improves your memory

While using colour makes revision more fun more exciting to look at your notes, it is also a scientifically-studied means of improving recall and memory. Colour stimulates the brain, it helps us to digest and remember information more easily. More importantly though, it's the choice, combination and association of different colours that helps make information more digestible and boosts memory.

Writing in colour has been shown to help us retain 50-80% more information. Perhaps this is because **90% of information transmitted to the brain is visual**.

## Choosing the right colours

According to basic colour theory:

Red and yellow stimulate the mind, but they do so in different ways: Red generally means something is important and needs our attention, so is good for memory retrieval, whereas yellow helps stimulate mental activity and highlights what's important

Red draws attention to something that is important and is good for memory retrieval. You're far more likely to **remember something written in red**, because red grabs your attention.

Yellow highlights points that need to be remembered and stimulates mental activity.

Blue has been proven to be good for boosting the ability to think creatively.

Both blue and green have both been found to be calming and to increase concentration. Blue in particularly is proven to boost creative thinking.
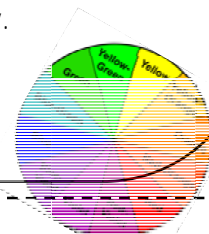
Combining Colours

It's not just the choice of colours but the combination of colours which aids memory. Opting for shades that create an eye-catching contrast is more visually stimulating and helps the brain to retain information. Generally speaking, the higher the level of contrast the more attention-grabbing a piece of work will be. Just keep in mind that too many colours can be both chaotic and distracting, while too much of one colour can have an adverse effect on memory recall; too much yellow, for instance, is known to provoke headaches.

Combining colours is about balance. Basic colour theory makes use of the colour wheel. A complementary colour scheme uses two colours from opposite sides of the wheel – such as yellow and purple – and should be used to highlight the difference between two things. An analogous scheme uses three colours next to one another (such as red, red violet and red orange), with one being the dominant colour (red). This colour scheme can be used to make something stand out, using the dominant colour for the most important information.

Applying colour schemes to your notes can help boost your memory.

Adding colour to a mind map

Adding a splash of colour to mind maps is a great way to improve memory. For an effective mind map, using a monochromatic colour scheme (two or more shades of the same colour) can be used for grouping similar objects or facts together. Each of the map's 'branches' could be a primary colour (blue, red, yellow)then each sub-branch should be a lighter shade of the colour before it. This will help with your cognitive process of understanding and grouping together different groups of information.

Use similar colours for the same topic and this will help you build an association between the two, improving recall when you get into the exam room. Building up an association between a topic and a specific colour can help with recall when you get into the exam room. If you've used a yellow highlighter for all of your science notes, wearing an item of yellow into your exam can prove very useful in remembering that highlighted information.

Stationary that may help you:
- – **Highlighters**
- – **Coloured Pens**
- – **Sticky Post-it Notes**

Stationary that may help you:
- – **Red Stationery**
- – **Pink Stationery**
- – **Orange Stationery**

Stationary that may help you:
- – **Yellow Stationery**
- – **Green Stationery**
- – **Blue Stationery**