

INTRODUCTION

There's one big difference between the National Tests (often called SATs) which you did aged 7 and 11, and the Key Stage 3 SATs coming up. You'll need to prepare well this time. There's loads of advice about how you can do this, at home and at school, in this booklet. You can start early and boost your confidence and achieve levels that you're proud of!

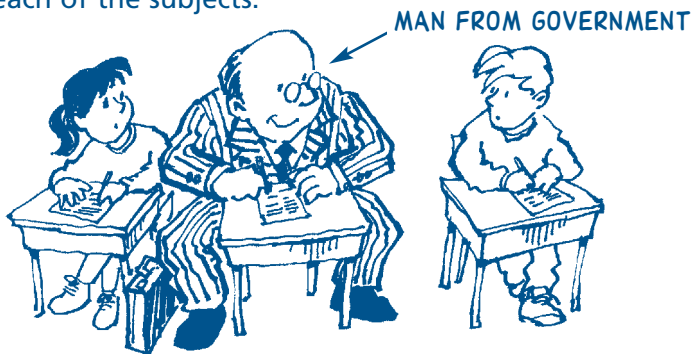
Firstly, though, let's take a brief look at what we're aiming for – levels of achievement in the SATs!

SATs AND LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT

Key Stage 3 SATs take place in May during Year 9.

The SATs subjects at Key Stage 3 are English, Maths and Science. In each subject, the Government has outlined a level of achievement which matches your age. These levels range from 1–8 and there's also an extra level for 'Exceptional Performance'.

In a nutshell, at the age of 14, the Government hopes that you will achieve either a level 5, 6 or 7 in each of the subjects.



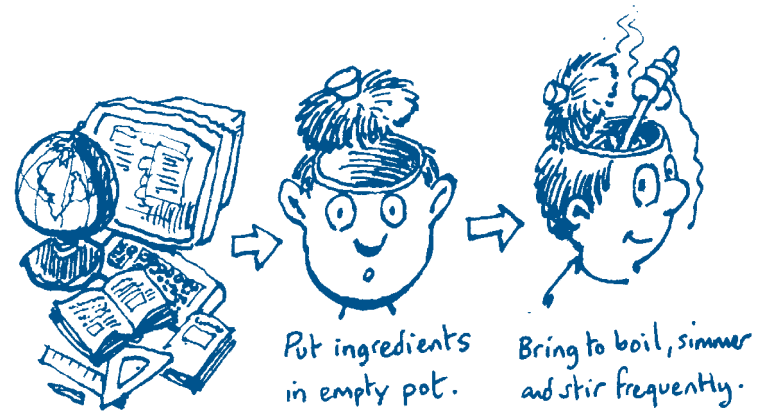
Reasons for getting good SATs results

- 👍 A boost to your self-esteem
- 👍 Less learning work to do for 3 GCSE courses
- 👍 A better chance of getting good GCSE results in Year 10.

Teachers have an important part to play in getting you ready for the SATs. So that you get the highest level possible in each subject, your teachers help you in several different ways, including:

- ✓ giving you all the information you will need
- ✓ helping you to understand it
- ✓ talking with you about how to improve your work
- ✓ giving you targets to aim for
- ✓ giving you questions to practise both in class and for homework
- ✓ giving you a mock SAT test so that you know what to expect.

Teachers are there to help and guide, but actually learning the work is down to you!



If you make good use of Years 7 and 8, especially Year 9, you can look forward to achieving well in the SATs. The people who mark the tests want to give you as many marks as they can, but you do have to earn them. You can really begin doing this at the start of Year 9.

From the beginning of Year 9, your teachers prepare you for the tests. Teachers design your classwork and your homework so that you have done all the necessary work long before May. Here are a few tips to help you help yourself.

- ★ **Do** your homework to the best of your ability. You need to understand your work before you can learn it.
- ★ **Do** learn your work, as this is the key to doing well.
- ★ **Do** regular revision to remind yourself of what you know.
- ★ **Do** talk about your work with your teachers – particularly if there is something you don't understand.
- ★ **Do** practise doing SATs questions: this helps you to understand, improves your learning and gives you confidence.

- ★ **Do** begin your learning at the beginning of Year 9.
- ★ **Do** start your revision in March, to allow yourself plenty of time to cover everything.

LEARNING AND REVISION

So, what is learning? Basically it is **remembering** and **understanding** how to do something and building on what you have done before.

Some things are easy to learn: you may not even realise you've taken in information such as realising that very hot things hurt you if you touch them.

Other things need much more effort. Think of roller blades. Once you have learned how to skate forwards you can build on that skill by learning how to skate backwards. Perhaps, later, you'll also learn how to do tricks or play games on your blades.

Your brain is like a very complicated computer. **Learning** is like feeding information into that computer. The information is stored for further use but you can add to it from time to time and recall it whenever you need it. Once stored, the information can be 'accessed' whenever needed.

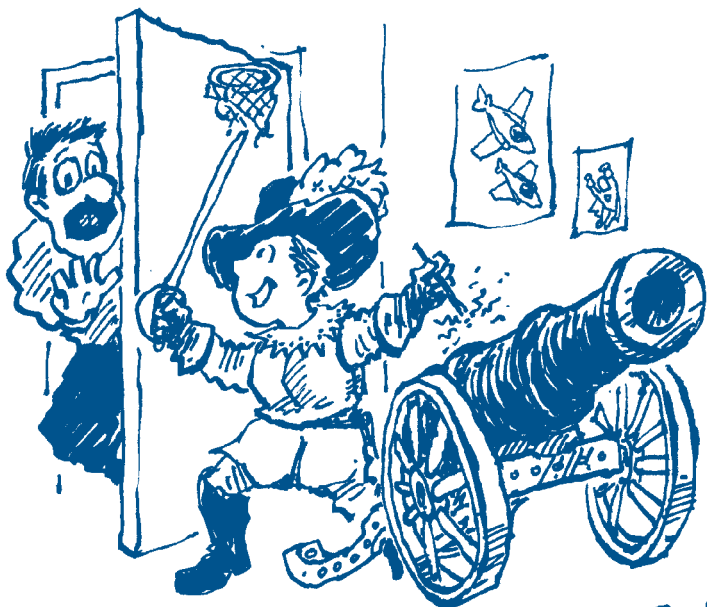
Revision is something an ordinary computer doesn't have to do! Once information is put into the computer it stays there forever unless we erase it. Sadly, while our brains can store information and instructions just like the computer, if we don't access that information or use that information regularly, our brains forget it. If that happens we can't



remember what to do or how to do it! This means that the brain will need to learn that information all over again!

Working at school is a bit like playing a computer game – think of it this way:

- ★ **inputting information** – say your English teacher tells you about verbs. She or he tells you what they are and how to use them. You can learn that they are 'doing words' – like *'going, jumping, writing'*.
- ★ learning is helped if you **fully understand** the information. Your English teacher gives you sentences and you have to underline the verb in each. The more you do the better you get at recognising verbs and where to use them.
- ★ from time to time your teacher will remind you about verbs and you will use them in sentences. Your brain is regularly reminded about them. You are **revising**.



Just a bit of historical research, Dad...

TIPS TO HELP MAKE LEARNING EASIER

- ★ **Do** make sure you work hard in lessons.
- ★ **Do** make sure that you understand your work – if in doubt, ask your teacher for help.
- ★ **Do** talk about your work with friends – explaining to someone else often helps you to understand.
- ★ **Do** make sure that you do your homework: it sounds like obvious advice, but go on, get your books out!
- ★ **Do** practise doing questions – this helps you to understand your work and helps your memory.
- ★ **Don't** get too tired. A late night means that you will be tired the next day. Then even easy tasks seem really hard.

- ★ **Do** try to work in a quiet place. This helps you to concentrate hard.
- ★ **Do** make posters of things you want to learn and put them round your room. For instance, make a coloured chart of chemical symbols and put it on your wall. This will constantly jog your memory and help you to learn.
- ★ **Do** write notes and read important information out loud. This helps you to concentrate.
- ★ **Do** persuade someone to test you when you have learned a topic.

4 STEPS TO MAKE SURE IT'S SUNK IN!

- 1 **LOOK** at a piece of information you want to learn. Really read it well twice.
- 2 **COVER** it over, so it's out of sight.
- 3 **WRITE** down what you remember, using a few words.
- 4 **CHECK** your learned work with what you read. Have you taken it all in and understood it? You can judge for yourself!

WHEN TO START REVISING

It's not all work and no play in Year 9! You can enjoy life and revise at the same time! Revision does need determination and some planning, though. If you keep practising the work you have learned, not only will you not forget it, but you will **get better at it**.

Practising what you've learned means revision. If you spread your revision out over the 6–8 weeks before the start of the tests, you:

- ★ should achieve more
- ★ will be under a lot less pressure – and will enjoy your work
- ★ are less likely to experience stresses and strains nearer the test time
- ★ will have more time to relax and enjoy yourself.

Remember, revision



helps you to access information

helps you to use information

keeps reminding you of what you've learned

helps you to answer questions in tests.

PLANNING YOUR WORK

If you plan your work well, revision will be a lot easier and what's more, you will reduce stress for yourself. Try to:

- ★ find out from your teachers exactly what you have to revise
- ★ make lists of what you have to do in English, Maths and Science
- ★ find out the dates of the tests and make a timetable
- ★ think about how to best plan your evenings. Every evening you should spend time on **normal homework**, on **revising** and on **relaxation**.

30 minutes
English



30 minutes
Maths



30 minutes
Me!



PREPARING YOUR REVISION PLAN

Use the timetable on the next page to prepare your revision plan – you can make as many copies as you like. When you have made it, **STICK TO IT!**

Fill in all your commitments, including:

- ★ lesson times
- ★ homework times
- ★ include other activities, such as after school clubs and sports
- ★ revise 2 subjects per night
- ★ revise English, Maths and Science for 30 minutes each on Saturday and again on Sunday
- ★ make sure that you allow time for breaks between homework subjects and revision subjects. You should also allow yourself a break of between 5–10 minutes every hour, otherwise your brain won't be refreshed enough to revise properly.

Perhaps you are one of those people who worry about exams and tests, no matter how well you have prepared. Worry can cause stress, and too much stress is harmful. So, if you're a worrier, or feel stressed, it's important that you talk to someone you trust. Here are some of the signs of stress. You:

- ★ don't want to be with friends and family, you just want to be alone all the time
- ★ feel unhappy, and perhaps unable to cope
- ★ can't sleep
- ★ can't concentrate in class or on homework or revision
- ★ have headaches or perhaps some stomach pains
- ★ become bad-tempered and get angry about silly things which would never usually make you cross.

BEATING STRESS

Most of us find stress hard to cope with. The best thing to do is to avoid it by being as organised as you can. Even so, stress can still creep up on you, so use the following ideas to help to beat it:

- 👍 **Do** keep to your revision plan.
- 👍 **Do** eat well and make sure you sleep well.
- 👍 **Do** get plenty of exercise – you'll feel a lot better.
- 👍 **Do** take regular breaks when revising.
- 👍 **Do** practise doing questions – do past SATs tests if you can.
- 👍 **Do** vary what you do to help stop boredom. Change the subject you are revising after about 30 minutes.

- 👍 **Do** spend time with your friends, relax and enjoy yourself, and get right away from work.
- 👍 **Do** remember that if you're doing your best you cannot do more.



I KNOW – IT'S THE SAME HERE –
HE TAKES A BREAK ABOUT ONCE EVERY HOUR..!

FIVE WAYS TO MAKE LEARNING AND REVISION MORE EFFECTIVE

1. Prepare your workplace

Make sure that you have:

- ✓ a comfortable chair
- ✓ a table which gives you enough space for everything you'll need
- ✓ a bright table lamp
- ✓ all the books and materials you'll need.

2. Learn by heart

Check that you've really memorised information by using the Look-Cover-Write-Check method shown on page 7. As well as memorising the important facts, there are some essentials in each subject area.

These are:

Maths

★ Units for **length**: millimetre **mm**; centimetre **cm**; metre **m**; kilometre **km**

area: square millimetres **mm²**;
square centimetres **cm²**

volume: cubic centimetres **cm³**;
cubic decimetres **dm³**

mass: grams **g**; kilograms **kg**

It may help you to remember that **milli** means 1/1000; **centi** means 1/100; **deci** means 1/10 and **kilo** means 1000

★ Simple mathematical formulae, times tables from 2 to 12 and how to multiply by 10, 100, etc.

English

★ Spellings of common words, especially ones which don't obey normal rules (see page 24 of this guide)

★ Spellings and uses of words which sound the same, for instance *to*, *too* and *two*; *there* and *their*; *wear* and *where*; *here* and *hear*; *your* and *you're*

★ A few useful quotations from the Shakespeare play you are studying

Science

★ Science facts, for instance, chemical formulae, types of energy, parts of animal and plant cells.

3. Active learning

It is very difficult to learn by just looking at a book. Your mind will wander and you'll soon start to think about other things. It's far better to learn in ways which keep you fully alert and thinking. Here are some tips to help you to learn in active ways:

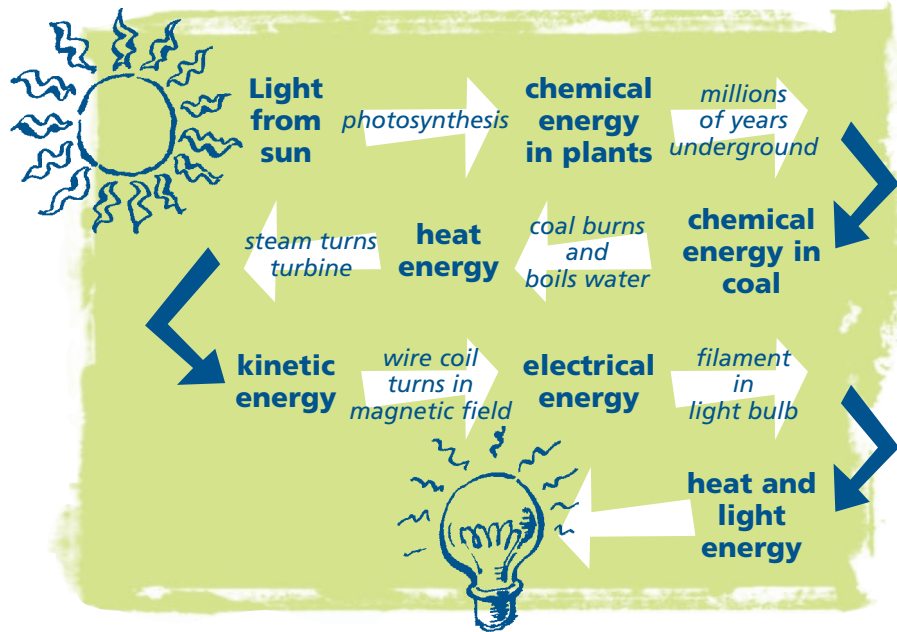
- ★ read out loud
- ★ underline important points in your notes
- ★ draw diagrams, using the Look-Cover-Write-Check method to test your knowledge (see page 7)
- ★ practise writing poems – read your efforts to mum or dad or to a friend
- ★ practise handwriting. Make sure every letter is formed properly and is as easy for your examiner to read as possible
- ★ look out for ways to improve your knowledge outside the classroom, for instance watch a play on TV, then note the characters and how they fit into the plot
- ★ practise checking over finished work for spelling mistakes or missing commas, full stops, etc. For fun, see if you can spot mistakes in a friend's work, and let him, or her, check yours.

4. Use memory-joggers

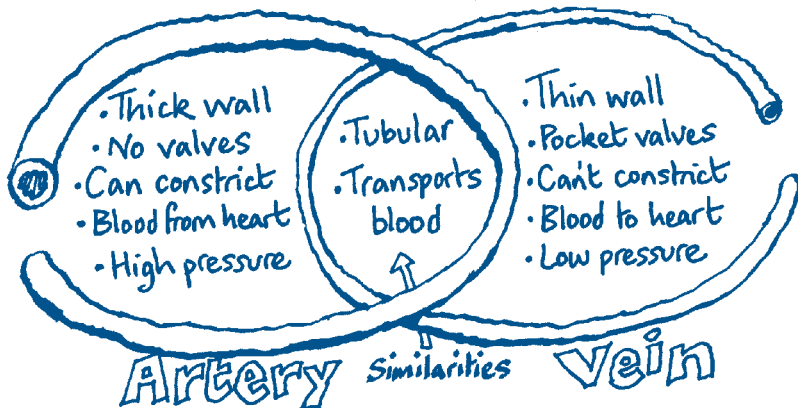
Make up word stories to help you remember important facts. For instance, each of the following chemicals has two atoms in its formula: the story about Brian should jog your memory about all 6:

Brian's	Clouted	Only	If	He's	Naughty
Bromine	Chlorine	Oxygen	Iodine	Hydrogen	Nitrogen
Br ₂	Cl ₂	O ₂	I ₂	H ₂	N ₂

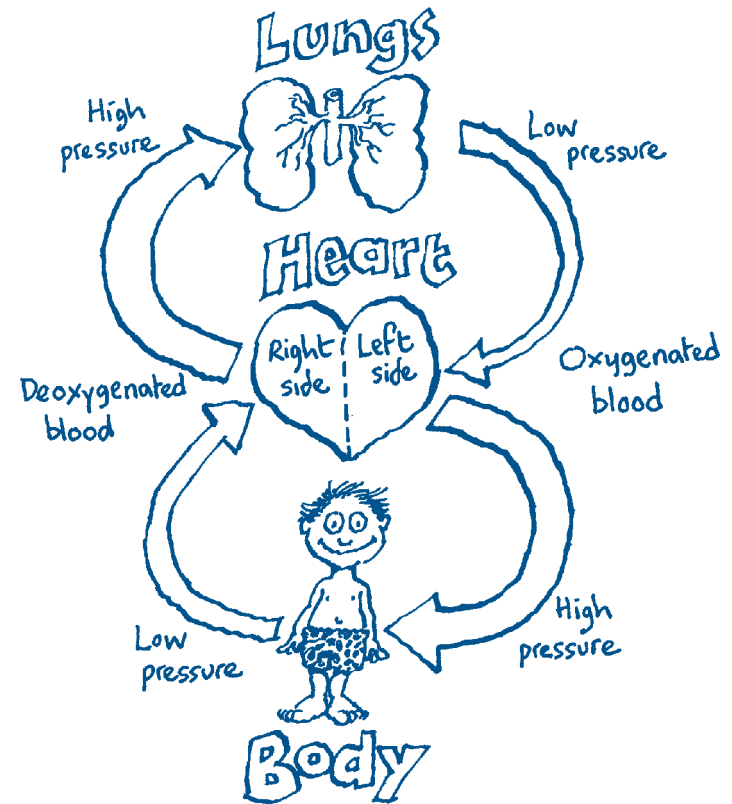
Other helpful flow charts might include the energy changes which take place in the production of light in a light bulb.



Sets also help you to recall similarities and differences. This set shows information about veins and arteries.



Simple diagrams can help explain complicated processes. This one, showing blood circulation, should be helpful.



PRACTISING TEST QUESTIONS

The more questions you do in every Key Stage 3 SATs subject, the better. In English and Maths, in particular, practising questions is one of the best forms of revision.

Remember that there are only three main types of questions. Look carefully and identify which type

your question is, then you'll have a better idea about what the examiner is looking for. The three types test:

- 1 only recall: how well have you remembered what you have learned. These are usually factual such as $5 \times 5 = ?$
- 2 understanding: how well have you understood important parts of your work? You might have to explain something, for example, why do gases expand when they are heated?
(Answer: particles move about faster and the spaces between them get bigger.)
- 3 how well can you solve problems? For example, can you interpret unknown information from a graph?

you practise past exam questions and your teacher goes through the answers with you



your confidence and technique improves



your motivation and your self-esteem improve



the quality of your answers improve



The good news is:



doing test questions helps you to remember what you have learned



doing test questions shows you the parts of your work which need extra revision



there are only a few ways in which a question can be set. The more practice you get, the less likely you are to be given a question in the tests which you have not done before



test questions give you more confidence in your own abilities.

Take care, though. If you try past test questions before you have learned your work properly you may have difficulty doing the questions, and so worry that you can't do the work. This could lead to a disastrous downward spiral, which could harm your confidence: avoid it by preparing your revision carefully.

You try practising past exam questions before you've thoroughly revised, and have difficulties



you take in less when you're tired and have less time to work in

you get stressed out and tired



PREPARING YOURSELF FOR THE TESTS

Like an athlete, your aim is to be at peak performance on the day of the tests. Around a week before the first SATs test is the time to ease off a bit. If you work very hard until the last minute, you could end up with everything churning round in your head. So take a bit of time out before each test. This should keep your memory fresh, and information should 'come back' to you as you need it in the tests themselves.

The week before the tests

- ★ make sure that you go to bed early and get plenty of exercise. You'll feel fitter and this will help you sleep
- ★ go back over those points which you have found difficult, just to help you remember them
- ★ if you have fallen behind, use this time to catch up, but don't overdo it.

The night before the tests

Now is the time to pamper yourself, and to do something you really enjoy! Here are a few worry busters to help you sleep:

- ★ get all your equipment ready – pens (at least one spare), pencil, pencil sharpener, rubber, ruler, calculator – and anything else which you are allowed to take into the test

- ★ check your test timetable. Make sure you know which room the test will be in. What time do you need to be there?
- ★ have a warm bath and just relax as much as possible
- ★ try to get an early night!

The day of the test

Everyone gets nervous before a test – don't let it worry you – after all, you've done your revision and practised questions – what is there to worry about?

ACTION CHECKLIST TO CALM YOUR NERVES

- ★ **Do** get out all the things you need and put them on your desk.
- ★ **Do** take your watch off and put it on the desk. Check the time against the room clock.
- ★ **Do** fill in the front of your test paper, so that you're ready to go when told.

DOING THE TESTS

You may still feel a bit nervous – everyone will – but try to keep your head so that you can read questions carefully. A lot of marks are often lost by not reading the question properly.

Here are some tips which will help to improve the way you answer questions and score the level you deserve:

- ★ read the question then read it again
- ★ underline important words or points in the question
- ★ the number of marks shown at the end of the question, or part of the question, tells you how many bits of information you need to write. For example, if the mark for a question is (1), you need to write down one bit of information, (2) means two bits of information and so on. If you write more than is needed you are wasting valuable time
- ★ if there is a part of a question you can't answer, don't worry, go on to the next part and do that. Come back to the part you couldn't do at the end, and give it another go
- ★ check your answer. Does it make sense? A quick check will usually show accidental mistakes and you can easily correct them.

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

English

There are some basic spellings you should learn by heart in order to prepare yourself for the tests – and GCSEs later on! Lots of people make mistakes in the parts underlined, so use the Look-Cover-Write-Check method (outlined on page 9) to memorise these and you'll be off to a flying start in English. Spread out the learning over 4 weeks or so, and you'll find it easier still.

<u>Acceptable</u>	<u>Physical</u>
<u>Accommodation</u>	<u>Receive</u>
<u>Achieve</u>	<u>Recommend</u>
<u>Analyse</u>	<u>Responsible</u>
<u>Assess</u>	<u>Separate</u>
<u>Believe</u>	<u>Stationary</u> (<i>meaning something which is not moving</i>)
<u>Communicate</u>	<u>Stationery</u> (<i>meaning paper, pens etc.</i>)
<u>Convenient</u>	<u>Success</u>
<u>Definite</u>	<u>Surprise</u>
<u>Desperate</u>	<u>Weird</u>
<u>Disappoint</u>	
<u>Necessary</u>	
<u>Permanent</u>	
<u>Persuade</u>	

Maths

Here are some simple rules which can help you in Maths:

- ★ if the digits in a number add up to 9 or a multiple of 9 the number can be divided exactly by 3 or 9, for example,
369: add the digits $3+6+9 = 18$ (2×9)
Also, $369/3 = 123$ and $369/9 = 41$
- ★ if the digits of a number add up to 3 or a multiple of 3, the number can be divided exactly by 3. For example,
21: add the digits $2+1 = 3$; 21 divides exactly by 3, $21/3 = 7$
- ★ if the last digit of a number is 0 or 5 the number can be divided exactly by 5. For example,
 $235/5 = 47$; $370/5 = 74$

$$31 \times 10 = 310$$

$$31 \times 100 = 3100$$

$$2.340 \times 10 = 23.40$$

$$2.34 \times 100 = 234.0$$

$$234.0 \div 10 = 23.40$$

$$234.0 \div 100 = 2.340$$

- ★ To multiply a number by 10 just add a 0 on the end. For example,

$$31 \times 10 = 310$$

To multiply a number by 100 just add two 0s to the end. For example,

$$31 \times 100 = 3100$$

- ★ To multiply a decimal by 10 move the decimal point one place to the right, for example,
for 2.340×10 , you move decimal point one place to right to make 23.40.

To multiply a decimal by a 100 move the decimal point 2 places to the right, for example,

for 2.34×100 , you move decimal point 2 places to right to make 234.0

- ★ To divide a decimal by 10 move the decimal point one place to the left, or to divide by 100 move the decimal place 2 places to the left and so on. For example,

$$234.0 \div 10 = 23.40 \text{ and } 234.0 \div 100 = 2.340$$

- ★ To divide fractions such as $\frac{1}{2} \div \frac{1}{4}$ change the sign to \times and turn the second fraction upside down. Then multiply $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{4}{1} = 2$

OTHER HELPFUL TIPS

Words often used in questions

Calculate: a number is needed in the answer. Show your working: even if the answer you get is wrong, you might still get some marks.

Complete: you have to finish a sentence, drawing, table or graph.

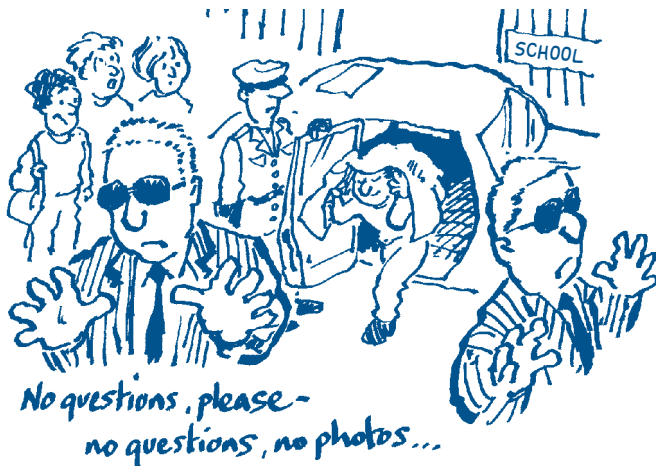
Describe: you must write a few sentences about the most important points.

Explain: write down what you understand.
Drawings often carry plenty of marks, and help to explain scientific information.

Find: often used in maths. It means that you may have to do a calculation, draw a graph or take a measurement.

Predict: often used in science. You have to suggest what might happen when you look at the results of an experiment.

Suggest: look for information in the question which you can then use to help you answer it. A personal opinion or comment may be helpful in cases where this word is used. Remember, use 'because' to justify your own ideas: this makes sure the examiner can see how you're thinking and considering.



*No questions, please -
no questions, no photos...*

WHAT TO DO BETWEEN TESTS

- ★ Try to relax as much as possible – take the night off if you can. Only revise points which are very important.
- ★ Try not to talk about the last test with friends – everyone thinks that they haven't done as well as they really have! Talking about it can cause unnecessary worry, and this could make you less confident for your next test.
- ★ Be positive – go into the test thinking about getting a high level. You have worked hard – you deserve a high level.

GOOD LUCK!!

First published 1999
Letts Educational
Schools and Colleges Division
9–14 Aldine Street
London W12 8AW
0181 740 2270
e-mail: mail@lettsed.co.uk

Text: © Alan Brewerton 1999

Design and illustrations © BPP (Letts Educational) Ltd 1999

Design, page layout and illustration by Hart McLeod, Cambridge

All our rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of Letts Educational.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A CIP record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 1 84085 176 7

Printed in Great Britain by

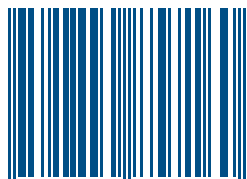
Letts Educational is the trading name of BPP (Letts Educational) Ltd

This Letts Revision Skills booklet will help you make the most of preparing for your Key Stage 3 SATs – from the moment that you start Year 9, right up to the time you enter the examination room. It is packed with practical ideas and advice on how to:

- ★ **organise your work**
- ★ **plan your revision**
- ★ **boost your memory**
- ★ **avoid getting stressed out**
- ★ **improve your exam technique**
- ★ **stay cool in the examination room**

Full of lively illustrations and useful tips, the Letts Revision Skills booklet is the ideal guide to help you plan an effective revision programme and get the best possible marks in your Key Stage 3 SATs.

ISBN 1-84085-716-1



9 781840 857160 >

£1.00

Letts
EDUCATIONAL