



Inspiring the leaders of tomorrow to think for themselves and act for others

MESSAGE FROM MR LAWLOR

The formal public examinations season began this week for our Year 11 students, with their GCSEs, and for our Year 13 students, with their A level studies. They have worked hard and well. I note below two articles which might be helpful to both students and parents.

How to succeed in exams

Dr Andrew Cunningham is a former GCSE examiner and has taught English at Bradfield College, Charterhouse, Radley College and North London Collegiate School
10th May 2023, The Spectator

Knowledge and ability are the two obvious keys to success. But there's another factor that's often overlooked: exam technique. Having taught thousands of students of all abilities at several leading schools, I know this is a vital reason why some teenagers are more successful than others: they use the right exam techniques under pressure. So what are these techniques? First and foremost, arrive early. Exams need a clear head and turning up at the last minute is certain to be stressful. Once in the exam hall (which will hopefully be a reassuringly familiar school building, like a sports hall), students should follow the clear instructions on the exam paper. The 'rubric' is there for a reason: to help candidates plan their time carefully and give basic guidance on the questions. As an example, it's no good spending 30 minutes on a question worth 20 per cent of the marks, then 15 minutes on a question worth 50 per cent. Yet it's amazing how many teenagers fail to plan their time carefully enough. Each year, after a crucial exam, some of the students I've taught tell me: 'Oh sir – I was doing so well, then I ran out of time!' They shouldn't have.

Equally, in most exams there's a choice of question. Here, a minute or two spent pondering which question to answer before putting pen to paper is time well spent. One question may look hard at first, then become clearer at second glance. In the pressure of the exam hall, it's all too easy to opt automatically for the first question – statistics tell us many students do this, even when the second question is actually easier. For example, one perennially popular exam text GCSE students will be writing on over the next few weeks is John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. There's always a choice of questions here, but some are trickier than others. 'Discuss the significance of animals in the novel' is a lot easier than 'Explore Slim's relationship with George and Lennie'. For a start, the book is called *Of Mice and Men*, so animals are bound to be important; whereas Slim is one of the most complex characters in an otherwise straightforward text. Yet both questions are worth the same marks. So make the right choices.

Similarly, there's an 'unseen' poem or passage in every English exam. These 'unseens' can cause panic. How do you prepare for them? But the instructions in bold type or italics at the top of the page are there to give some idea what the poem or passage is about: a signpost, directing the candidate into the question. It's amazing how many candidates don't even bother reading such helpful material – a recipe for disaster. Again, each summer I'm told, post-exam, by pupils: 'Oh sir, I never even saw that!'

Next, cut out the 'own goals', or avoidable mistakes. No examiner expects a script to be error-free, but careless mistakes are irritating – especially when the same howlers keep cropping up, costing valuable marks. A classic here is using commas instead of full stops at the end of sentences. In GCSE English, assessed for spelling, punctuation and grammar, this kind of basic mistake and others like it ('it's/its', 'could of' etc) could cost half a grade. Five minutes should be spent checking for avoidable mistakes at the end of every exam. There are bound to be some. And students must make sure they answer the question set – not the one they hoped would come up and have done countless practice papers on. No matter how good the answer, if it's off-topic, it won't score top grades. There's no time for detailed essay plans either. A few basic bullet points should suffice as an outline – making sure the main points are covered and the thread isn't lost halfway through the answer.

Finally, it helps to remember that the person marking the exam script is a human being. Anything that makes his or her life easier in terms of clear, neat presentation will help get the examiner on-side. Who knows, there may be a 50/50 decision on whether to award an A or B grade. Clarity and legibility could give a candidate the benefit of the doubt here. An examiner with a headache, caused by frowning over a hastily scrawled script, is unlikely to be in a favourable mood. And last but not least, once the exam is over, forget about it and move on to the next one. It's no good fretting over a bad paper. Keep a cool head in the exam hall, follow these simple basic techniques and exam disasters can be avoided.

It's exam season: how to boost your child's memory

Antonia Hoyle talks to education experts about the strategies that really work

13th May 2023, The Times

Good stationery and a steady supply of snacks might help, but the biggest asset your teenager can tap into this exam season is their memory. And there are proven ways to help boost it. That's according to the cognitive neuroscientist Professor Jon Simons, part of Cambridge University's Memory Laboratory, which is dedicated to researching the mechanisms of memory. Last week the lab launched the largest study of its kind into "super memorisers" with a drive to recruit hundreds of people who believe they have exceptionally good memories to see what the rest of us can learn from them. Memories are made when connections called synapses form between nerve cells (neurons) in our brain. Each contains a neurotransmitter that sends chemical messages between the neurons. The good news for anyone doing their GCSEs or A-levels — or indeed finals — is that these connections are usually most efficient between the ages of 10 and 30. There are several different types of memory, but semantic memory (the capacity to recall words, concepts and numbers) and working memory (how much you can hold in your mind at once) are arguably the most useful for exams, and can be improved with the correct action.

Encourage 30 minutes' exercise daily

"We know exercise is very good for memory," Simons says, partly because it introduces more oxygenated blood into the brain and "enables the brain to perform more efficiently". Meanwhile irisin, a hormone produced by muscles during exercise, has been found to improve memory by enhancing the health and function of neurons. Last year, research found aerobic exercise — moderate intensity cardio such as jogging — is more effective at releasing irisin in humans than anaerobic exercise (short bursts of intense exercise such as skipping). Simons recommends doing a form of aerobic exercise every day, with Harvard Medical School suggesting 30 minutes is the optimum amount.

Your child should be getting at least eight hours' sleep

Forget burning the midnight oil during exam season — research has found that not getting enough sleep reduces learning function and semantic memory recall by as much as 40 per cent. It is thought that while we're asleep synapses shrink to selectively prune irrelevant memories (what we ate for lunch) while consolidating helpful memories (maths revision) in the hippocampus. "If your sleep is disrupted it has a real impact on memory function," Simons says. This, he explains, is because the "permanent filing job" is often done overnight. Simons adds that the effect is cyclical: when we're tired, we're less likely to be able to absorb new information properly in the first place. The NHS recommends teenagers get a minimum of eight hours' sleep a night. And sleeping pills are not the answer — the Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine has found that medication such as zolpidem has "the potential to reduce the degree of sleep-dependent memory consolidation".

Regular breaks are essential — 10 minutes off for every 25 minutes worked

Time out from studying is thought to strengthen the connections between neurons, allowing us to process the information we've just learnt. The length of break depends on the individual, but the popular "pomodoro technique" for time management allows a 5-10 minute break per 25 minutes' work. Catherine Loveday, professor of cognitive neuroscience at the University of Westminster, suggests incorporating short walks into time off, since movement stimulates the hippocampus "for good evolutionary reasons — if you leave your house you need to know how to get back to it. Our memory systems are woken up by moving."

Reading aloud will consolidate memory

Loveday explains that "the more deeply you process something, the better your chances of remembering" and recommends students learn something in as many ways as possible to improve their "memory trace". A 2017 study by the University of Waterloo in Ontario, which tested methods of remembering written information, found that you're most likely to remember something if you read it aloud. Loveday says that looking at pictures of the subject you're learning about also deepens your understanding, as does putting it into context. Someone trying to memorise the sequences of a chemical reaction could go on a walk and allocate a specific point on the route to each sequence. In an exam, remembering the route will help you to recall the sequence in order, Loveday says. "It's about triggering the memory trace."

Install an internet blocker app on their smartphone

Who hasn't felt the frustration of being fully engaged in a task, only to be interrupted and forget it all? One 2014 study by George Mason University in Virginia found distractions so destructive that a 60-second interruption was enough to wipe a short-term memory. Modern technology is designed to distract, and when we're distracted we're less likely to absorb information fully enough to consolidate it. Simons recommends experimenting with apps — try one called Freedom — that can block internet access for assigned periods, or leaving phones in a different room and gradually increasing the amount of separation time to train teenagers to focus better.

Ban sugary snacks

Before they try to turbocharge the French revision with another biscuit, there is evidence that an unhealthy diet can jeopardise brain function. A 2021 study on mice found a diet high in fat and sugar could cause cognitive degeneration, while research has shown that women who eat more saturated fats from foods such as red meat and butter perform worse in memory tests than women who eat less of these fats.

Give them a meditation app to follow

Repeated research has found meditation can boost memory. In 2021 researchers at Binghamton University in New York tracked how practising meditation for eight weeks changed the brain patterns of students and made them better able to focus. Loveday says meditation also helps to reduce stress, which has been proved to impair memory. It also encourages rest, which helps the consolidation of memories in a similar way to sleep, and allows us to take control of our focus, "which is crucial to memory". **Happy Not Perfect: Mind Gym** and **Headspace** are both good apps for teenagers new to meditation.

SPOTLIGHT

A graphic of a spotlight beam shining down onto a circular area on the right side of the header.

Each week, a member of staff provides a brief outline of their work in the school in our 'Spotlight' feature. This will enable the CCHS community to appreciate the nature, importance and impact of the industrious and talented staff who work at our school. Allied with our wonderful students, encouraging parents and supportive governors, our school community is blessed with people who are committed to excellence in girls' education and empowerment.

Mr Lawlor

In many ways I have a dual role here at CCHS.

I am Director of Music which encompasses all aspects of musical teaching and learning across all key stages as well as overseeing the busy life of our extracurricular offer. Within my music remit, I also work closely with our 12 peripatetic colleagues to ensure that all 240 students taking individual lessons engage, achieve, and enjoy their learning. Having such a strong team of music teachers in our school allows us to offer such a wide variety of styles and genres which leads to a vibrant department.

I am also a member of our Extended Senior Leadership Team where my focus is our school timetable. I work closely with Mrs Cross and Mrs Davis to ensure we put in place the very best timetable we can for every single student and member of staff in our school. Our entire school community lives and breathes all aspects of the timetable every day, so it is a vital piece of work. The timetable itself changes through each academic year for a variety of reasons so it is essential to keep on top of any alterations. There is barely a week that goes by where a change is not needed.

Mr C. Lamberti

Director of Music & Timetable Leader (Associate SLT)



Student Achievements

Have you got some news to share?
If so, please email Mrs Gross (jgross@cchs.co.uk) and attach a photo or logo, if applicable.



Congratulations to Kirit, (11C), who successfully auditioned for a place in the National Youth Theatre.

The National Youth Theatre is an organisation, first established in 1956, who nurture the performing talents of young people aged 14-25 across Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Their alumni include renowned performers, such as: Dame Helen Mirren, Daniel Craig and Chiwetel Ejiofor. The National Youth Theatre accept less than one in seven people who audition, which makes Kirit's achievement all the more impressive.



Imaan, (7A), took part in the Intermediate Novice Character Ballet category of The British Arts Awards and won locally. She also achieved joint 2nd place nationally.

The British Arts Awards is an annual international dance, singing and drama competition.





Student Achievements

Have you got some news to share?
If so, please email Mrs Gross (jgross@cchs.co.uk) and attach a photo or logo, if applicable.

On Saturday 13th May, Sineli, (8G), performed on the World Music Stage at the Welwyn Garden City World Food Festival.

This was Sineli's solo debut as a dancer; she is performing an 'Eagle Dance' which is a remix of traditional dance 'Ukusa Wannama'.

Well done, Sineli!



ARTIST OF THE WEEK-

Nethuki, (8H), for her delightful colour pencil drawing of a bunny.





Student Achievements

Have you got some news to share?
If so, please email Mrs Gross (jgross@cchs.co.uk) and attach a photo or logo, if applicable.

Camilla, (9F), took part in the Swimathon on Sunday 14th May, swimming 2.5K to fundraise for Cancer Research and Marie Curie.

She has so far raised £379. Her fundraising page is still open until the Wednesday 31st of May.

You can donate to Camilla's JustGiving page by clicking [here](#):



Mary Kenyon Poetry Prize

Thank you to everybody who contributed their work to the Mary Kenyon Poetry Prize competition this year. There were many absolutely stunning entries on the theme of 'Time', and as ever there was much discussion and debate in the judging process, which this year included two members of Mary Kenyon's family, Caroline and Henry. It is always extremely inspiring to see how creative CCHS students are. There will soon be a printed book available featuring the work of all competition entrants over the last five years.

I am proud to announce the following winners from each age group:

Years 10-11 Kavya, (11C), with her poem 'Time'

In this age group an honourable mention goes to Amy, (11F), for her poem 'Art is Dead'

Years 12-13 Fedorah, (12JVI), with her poem 'Don't Spill the Tea'

In this age group honourable mentions go to Ella, (13SCM), for the poem 'Goldfish' and Holly, (13VCA), for the poem 'Keeping the throwaway things shows she's gone.'

Well done to our winners and to all entrants – please enjoy the poems below.

Time

*It's like the curing, cold rush of ocean foam tickling the sand
sometimes slowly
surreptitiously as the falling
of a glacier.*

*Sometimes it hurries on quickly, like a dawn commuter
On the London Underground
late*

*for a delayed train which yawns as it reluctantly travels the earth's dark colon, the worn lines of iron
its aging, rusting skeleton
through which it carries us.*

*We are the lifeblood of its being, yet we bind it like the bars of its impermeable cage
Oftentimes it wins, takes us and
Steals us like quicksand*

*Rarely it's kind, like the blessed soul who holds
Open the door of an upwards falling
Lift.*

*It sings silence, screams out whispers...
It is the lone, secluded emotion, it's the
shadow of a pebble bathed in sunshine
Trickling, tickling like a rush
Of ocean foam. It yearns to cease, the one act
It forbids. A hypocrite; a covetous serpent.*

Don't Spill the Tea

My future daughter, how I wish you were here to watch and learn! To stand by and witness as I gaze upon the beauty of the cheongsam being ironed in the next room, to hear the laughter downstairs, indicating the arrival of family and friends.

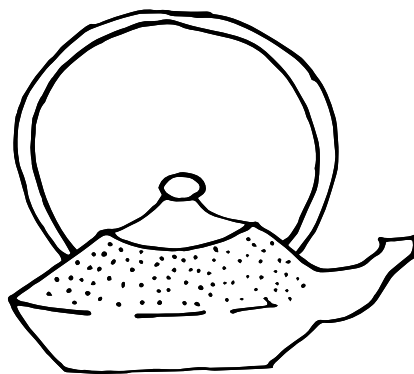
To observe first hand, as I prepare the tea to begin the tea ceremony, minutes before the wedding.
Red dates, lotus seeds and lily petals dance to the rhythm of the stirring spoon,
the warm scent reminiscent of our motherland; the feeling we never left home.

Pay attention to the way I bow in respect to our elders, to those who have carefully guided me through this life; Māma and Bàba, Nǎinai and Yéye, Gēge and Jiějie.
Observe how the tea is served. A nervous silence despite the unspoken voices desperately saying,
“Don't spill the tea” (This is considered an inauspicious start to marriage.)
Watch my two hands holding the saucer, kneeling as I hand it over to Yéye.
Careful not to spill the tea, careful not to make a fool of myself.

Admire the reddish swirl design on the gàiwǎn. Envy not the many gifts offered to me after the tea ceremony. A symbol of luck and good fortune will my hóngbāo bring.
Admire gold designs neatly embroidered on my red silk veil; this shall be yours, future daughter!

This is your destiny, future daughter, as it was mine and my mother. These are our traditions;
now we pass them over to you.

Make us proud, my daughter. The world will be watching.
Make sure you kneel properly, make sure you serve your elders first.
And whatever you do, don't spill the tea.





IF YOU WERE an **ENGINEER** What WOULD YOU DO?®



EAST ENGLAND 2023

Distinction Shortlisted

Congratulations to all 7 of our student entries who were 'Distinction – Shortlisted' – this means that they have also gone on to the next round of judging for the final winner!

The students are:

Ginika (Year 10)
Alexandra (Year 11)
Jessica (Year 11)
Rayana (Year 11)
Rucha (Year 11)
Abigail (Year 9)
Sophie (year 9)

CCHS Athlete of the Week



Athlete of the week this week goes to Isabella, (8G), for her amazing efforts in the ESAA Track and Field Cup on Tuesday.

Isabella ran an amazing 13.3 seconds in the 100m and nearly jumped out of the pit in the Long Jump, jumping 4.54m.

Well done, Isabella!



Please follow our CCHS PE Department Twitter account to keep up to date with our sporting news

@CCHS4GPE



Please follow our PE Instagram account for everything PE & Sport.

@pe_cchs





Year 9 Industrial Cadets Visit to Leonardo UK

On Tuesday 16th May, the Industrial Cadets Bronze Team and Rampaging Chariots Team visited Leonardo UK, Basildon. We were privileged to be taken on a detailed tour of the company. From satellites to VR technology, we were able to see the relevance and applications of STEM subjects in industry. The wide variety of career opportunities that the company introduced to us was eye-opening and engaging. We all found different aspects of the trip enjoyable and interesting. The Rampaging Chariots Team showcased the chariot and the Industrial Cadets Team presented the project on the sustainable theme park. Both teams received valuable feedback and a few ideas to work on before our final presentations in June. We also had a chance to talk to some apprentices and ask questions. Overall, it was a great experience and we have learnt a lot in the process!

Tanya, Elosie and Joelle (Year 9)





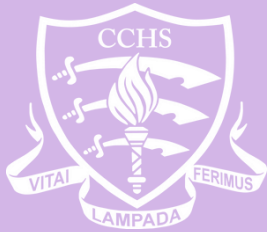
HotTopics



Rose and Matilda in Year 12 attended an industry-leading technology event 'The Studio' at London's Abbey Road Studios on Tuesday 16th May. During this event, they met their mentor, who is an established female leader in the tech industry, and collected their award. Their mentor will provide guidance, support, and valuable insights to help them develop their idea and advance their career in technology.

Congratulations!





CCHS PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

Great news for Chelmsford County High School PA - Essex has been paid a (#easyfundraising) £1.5 million (#DonationDay) pay-out! If you want to support them too, please sign up now. It takes 2 minutes & 7,500 brands including John Lewis & Partners, eBay, Argos, M&S and more are involved. They will donate for free every time you shop with them!

Visit: https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/chelmsfordcchs/payments/6073e7?utm_medium=email-share&utm_source=whatsapp&utm_campaign=dd-may-23&utm_term=Q1237&utm_content=socialshare

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has received

£151.97

easyfundraising has paid out over £1.5 million in donations this quarter.

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- 1 Sign up and choose us**
Provide us with a few details to set up your profile with easyfundraising.
- 2 Download our browser extension**
Our Donation Reminder plug-in pops up automatically when you shop to let you know when a donation is available.
- 3 Track your donations**
You'll be able to see how much you've raised in your account and we'll send updates on when Chelmsford County High School PA Essex gets paid.

[Sign up and support this cause](#)