

# PREPARE TO PERFORM

ISSUE 4  
DEC 2025



Deer Park School

## MESSAGE FROM MR SMITH

Two weeks from the Christmas break Year 11 are continuing to put in the hard work with revision at home and engaging with the Prepare to Perform program in the afternoons. Every piece of effective revision, whether in school or at home, is helping move content to the long-term memory, meaning students are more likely to retrieve this information when in exams, so keep going with this Year 11, you are really supporting your future self with the effort you are putting in now.

Please look through this issue of the Prepare to Perform newsletter with your son/daughter in order to get a better understanding of what each subject is currently looking at or revising in the Prepare to Perform sessions.

As a reminder to parents, there is a coffee morning on Friday (12th) for parents, regarding how to support your child with the upcoming practice exams - I look forward to seeing some of you there.

## Dates for your Diary

- **GCSE Dance Set Phrase- NEA**  
Thursday 11th December
- **Coffee Morning** - 12<sup>th</sup> December
- **Food & Nutrition NEA** - 8<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> December
- **Art Practical Exam** - 12<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> December
- **Music NEA Day** - 15th December
- **GCSE PE - Practical** - 16<sup>th</sup> December
- **French Speaking Exam** - 18<sup>th</sup> December
- **Year 11 Practice Exams** -  
Beginning 9th January for two weeks
- **Year 11 RD2** - 9th February

## TUTOR SESSIONS

In tutor sessions this half term, students have been continuing to think about the idea of **delated gratification** - putting in the hard work and effort now to get a bigger reward later (check out [the famous Marshmallow Experiment](#) in the field of psychology!)

They have also looked at ways to beat 'the November slump'... as it gets darker and colder, it sometimes feels like we hit a wall at this time of year. This is normal, but it can be overcome. Students have been given tips such as 'eat the frog' - if your job is to eat a frog, best to do it first thing in the morning... in other words: if you have something you are dreading, do that thing first!

We have also asked pupils to visualise the moment they open their GCSEs envelope in August of 2026. What do they want to feel on that day? Whatever that is, it is a **result**. For a result to happen, an **action** needs to happen first. We discussed small actions that they can take each day, to get that result.



# COLLEGE OPEN EVENINGS / DAYS

FOR A FULL LIST OF ALL  
OPEN EVENTS

CLICK HERE



## ASSEMBLIES

Mr Theobald has been dropping into assemblies each week this term to deliver Brain Hacks – evidence from cognitive psychology that tell us how best to learn, revise and prepare for exams. Everything shared with students has been from the most reliable and valid studies in the field of cognition, so pupils are armed with the information that they can use to guide their revision.

## YEAR 11 SUCCESS

Our students have been working incredibly hard over the last month and a number of students have attended over 20 prepare to perform sessions. With only two weeks remaining, there are still at least 6 more sessions students are able to attend. Any student who reaches 25 extra hours by the end of term will have completed a whole extra school week this term!! A big well done to the following students who have been our highest attenders since our last issue.

**James A, Jayana A, Cheresse B, Jennifer B, Benjamin B, Emma C, Kayden E, Ewan H, Emily J,  
Harry K, Jonathan L, Emma M, Orhuerakpo O, Jayden P, Hollie S,  
Charlie T, Yuna Z-R**

## PREPARE TO PERFORM AFTER SCHOOL SESSIONS

Please find attached the next half term of the prepare to perform programme.



# GCSE PRACTICE TIMETABLE

Please find attached the GCSE Practice Examination schedule for your child. An individual exam timetable will be issued with information on rooms and seats in December. This will be emailed to you and students with a link via our exams assist portal. This is the same process that was used for the year 10 exams.

The practice examinations are conducted under full GCSE conditions. Their purpose is to familiarise students with the rules and regulations governing public examinations. We appreciate your support in encouraging your child to approach these exams with seriousness.

Students must pay close attention to the dates and times of their exams and ensure they are punctual. They should arrive at the examination room a minimum of 10 minutes before the official start time, equipped with all necessary items, including a black pen, as black ink is mandatory for public examinations.

Further specific exam details are provided in an attached exam booklet. We strongly advise you and your child to read this booklet, along with other helpful information and guidance on the exam process, which is available on our website: <https://www.deerparksecondary.org/information/exam-info-and-results/>.

Taking the time to review this material together contains vital information for successful preparation.

The exam schedule is very tight so we will suspend the Year 11 timetable from Monday 12th January until Friday 23 January, 2026, inclusive. During this time, students only need to be in school for their examinations. If you wish your son/daughter to remain in school during the week, suitable accommodation for them to study will be provided in the LRC, students will sign in and out with a member of staff. Students who have an exam on Friday 9th January will remain in lessons as usual on this day and will be released for their examinations.

Our expectations are that if students are not sitting an examination or working in school, they are at home revising and preparing for their next exam. We would like to ask for your support in that students should not be out in the community during school hours and any students who are not abiding by this request may have their exam leave suspended and their normal timetable reinstated.

Although these examinations are a practice for students to experience the questions and receive feedback on them they will also be taken into account if the school is asked to provide a Centre Assessed Grade as we were for previous Year 11 cohorts 2020 and 2021. Therefore, students should apply themselves to their studies and attempt each exam to the best of their ability.

If you have any questions regarding this examination session, please direct them to Mrs Clarke, Exams Officer by emailing [exams@deerparksecondary.org](mailto:exams@deerparksecondary.org) in the first instance.

# GCSE PRACTICE TIMETABLE

## Y11 Practice Exam Timetable

Week B	9 January
Period	Friday
1	8:30am start <b>French Writing</b> 1hr 15 mins (F) 1hr 20 mins (h)
2	
3	
4	
5	

Week A	12 January - 16 January				
Period	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	8:30am start <b>Pe - Paper 1</b> 1hr 15 mins	8:30am start <b>Media</b> 1hr 30 mins	8:30am start <b>Geography - Paper 1</b> 1hr 30 mins	8:30am start <b>Drama</b> 1hr 30 mins	8:30am start <b>Music</b> 1hr 30 mins
2				8:30am start <b>RS - Paper 1</b> 1hr 45 mins	8:30am start <b>Dance</b> 1hr 30 mins
3	11:00am start <b>French Listening</b> 45 mins (F) 1hr (h)			11:00am start <b>French Reading</b> 45 mins (F) 1hr (h)	
4	1pm start <b>Maths - Paper 1</b> 1hr 30 mins	1pm start <b>Biology</b> 1hr 15 mins (c) 1hr 45 mins (s)	1pm start <b>English Literature</b> 1hrs 45 mins	1pm start <b>Maths - Paper 2</b> 1hr 30 mins	1pm start <b>History - Paper 1</b> 2 hrs
5				1pm start <b>*Y10* Statistics - Paper 1</b> 1hr 30 mins	

Week B	19 January - 23 January				
Period	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	8:30am start <b>Pe - Paper 2</b> 1hr 15 mins	8:30am start <b>IT</b> 1hr 30 mins	8:30am start <b>RS - Paper 2</b> 1hr 45 mins	8:30am start <b>De</b> 1hr 45 mins	8:30am start <b>Geography - Paper 2</b> 1hr 30 mins
2				8:30am start <b>Food</b> 1hr 45 mins	
3					
4	1pm start <b>Maths - Paper 3</b> 1hr 30 mins	1pm start <b>English Language</b> 1hr 45 mins	1pm start <b>Chemistry</b> 1hr 15 mins (c) 1hr 45 mins (s)	1pm start <b>History - Paper 2</b> 2 hrs	1pm start <b>Physics</b> 1hr 15 mins (c) 1hr 45 mins (s)
5	1pm start <b>*Y10* Statistics - Paper 1</b> 1hr 30 mins				

# FRENCH

In French, we have now gone through 6 out of the 8 modules that they need to study for their GCSE's. All these recap lessons and baseline tests for each module have really helped our students to understand where they need to improve and which topics they need to do revision for.

Additionally, we have been doing some revision on tenses during lessons and will be doing some practice of tenses during Prepare to Perform, therefore, it is very important that students attend these sessions. As always, we will also be focusing on Speaking skills as our pupils have their Speaking Mock on the 17th and 18th of December - Bonne chance!

A big thank you and well done to all of you who have been attending the Prepare to Perform sessions since the beginning - it is great to see lots of you improving your skills and realising where you need to improve. Keep up with your good work!

# GEOGRAPHY

As Year 11 students conclude their final topic in Geography, it is time to begin proactive and focused revision for their upcoming exams.

A particular priority for this revision must be their case studies. These form the foundation of their geographical knowledge and are essential for securing the best grades. We are encouraging all students to ensure they can confidently recall 4-5 specific facts (such as locations, statistics, impacts, or management strategies) for every case study covered in the course. We would greatly appreciate your support in encouraging this targeted revision at home. Quizzing yourself on these is going to be the best way to recall them.

To complement this, our 'Prepare to Perform' sessions in school will continue to focus on exam skills and technique in the run-up to Christmas. These skills are vital, as they are the tools students use to apply their case study knowledge effectively. Without a strong exam technique, it is impossible to demonstrate deep understanding and achieve higher marks.

# HISTORY

Year 11 Historians have now completed their first revision cycle on Germany, Democracy and Dictatorship which focused on subject content for this topic. Pupils should use their subject knowledge audit to guide their independent revision in this topic, improving on the topics that they identified as a priority for revision and consolidation. If you need support or guidance on these topics, please see your classroom teacher.

Pupils have now moved on to their first revision cycle on Conflict and Tension, 1918-1939 The Inter War Years. Any prepare to perform sessions until 15th December will focus on this topic specifically. Following this topic, we will complete one week of revision on Britain, Health and the People before the end of Half Term.

# MATHS

Below is a summary of our focus for the next four weeks:

Lesson Content	Foundation: Unit 25 - Volume and Surface Area Revision for Year 11 practice exams	Higher: Unit 24 - Iteration Revision for Year 11 practice exams
Self-study - Week Begining 8th Dec 15th Dec	Past GCSE practice paper	Paper 2 (calculator) Set: Tues 9th, Due: Tues 16th Paper 3 (calculator) Set: Tues 16th, Due: Tues 6th Jan
Self-study - Week Bgining 5 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Sparx Maths	Set: Tuesday 6th Jan Due: Monday 12th Jan

Should you need help with self-study or content covered in class, you are welcome to attend any of the drop-in sessions run in the department:

**Maths drop-in (all years) - Tuesday Break 1, Rooms 117 and 118**

**KS4 Core Intervention (years 9 - 11) - Wednesday Break 1, Room 117**

For now, you should aim to complete 30-60 minutes per week of independent revision outside of lessons, and in addition to the weekly self-study that will be set. Below are some suggested topics for this month.

Topic				Revision Guides	Sparx Maths
Foundation students	Fractions, Decimals and Percentages			Chapter 4, pages 24 - 31 Chapter 5, pages 32 - 39	U163, U704, U646, U746, U736, U692, U739, U439, U475, U224, U544, U538, U874, U888, U594, U925, U881, U916, U554, U349
Higher students	Data presentation			Chapter 29, pages 228 - 233 Chapter 30, pages 234 - 241	U911, U120, U981, U363, U557, U508, U172, U590, U193, U199, U277, U128, U200, U909, U840, U185, U814, U983, U267, U569, U854, U877, U717

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



[Deer Park GCSE Maths Revision website](#)

Keywords, practice exam questions by topic, Knowledge Organisers



[Corbett Maths](#)

Questions and videos for every topic, practice exam papers that can be completed at home



[www.mathsgenie.co.uk](http://www.mathsgenie.co.uk)

Exam questions on every topic



# ENGLISH

Students have now finished their English Literature studies – An Inspector Calls, Power and Conflict Poetry, Unseen Poetry, Macbeth and A Christmas Carol! There is a lot to remember and the key is to learn quotes and how to analyse them – the plot is not going to get you marks!

In our prepare to perform sessions, we are focusing on the Power and Conflict poems that students learnt a year ago to try and help with this load.

This week, we were so excited to have Box Clever Theatre company in to perform ‘Macbeth’ to our students. This was a key bit of revision for them ahead of their January mocks and highlighted some key quotes for them to revise. In class, we are doing the final questions on Language Paper 2 – and before Christmas all topics for the GCSE will have been covered. The key thing from then on is practicing the skills needed for the exam! We will continue to emphasise our structure to students to get them writing as much as possible about a little – The extract beneath is an example of how to structure a paragraph and how much detail needs to be included.

Question	What this means	Example
Who?	Who is the author? Always link back to the author trying to teach the audience something	Shakespeare
What?	What have they done in relation to the question and what technique have they used?	Initially presents Macbeth as a heroic character to the outside world. However, the audience can recognise hints that he is not through dramatic irony.
Where?	Where have they done this? Find a quote from the text – two that link is even better!	This is clearly evidenced in the metaphor ‘Stars, hide your fires, let not light see my black and deep desires’.
How?	How does this quote prove your initial point?	This quote reveals he is not a hero as, before he has even spoken to Lady Macbeth, we can tell he is having dark and murderous thoughts about his King, who he has supposedly just been so heroic for.
How?	How can something in the quote be looked at in more detail to support it?	The imagery of ‘stars’ hiding could show that he wants fate to be rewritten. Also, stars are seen as positive and something to wish on
How?	How can this quote be interpreted differently?	Furthermore, the use of colour imagery in ‘black and Deep Desires’ reinforces the evil connotations that Macbeth is associated with. Black, in this instance, is likely to be linked to the witch's black magic, and therefore, he would not be seen as a hero. This is reinforced by his link to the witches, as mentioned previously.
Why?	Why is the author presenting the character or theme in this way?	Shakespeare may have presented Macbeth this way to show the audience from the outset that appearances can be deceiving – deception being a key theme in the play. Macbeth’s trust in the witches instantly makes him unlikable and is perhaps a lesson to the audience that those who are leaders on the battlefield are not the best political leaders. Perhaps this would support King James’ role on the throne at the time and deter people from thinking they could overthrow him like the Gunpowder Plot tried to.



# DESIGN TECH

As we approach Christmas, we have another deadline to be aware of for the Design and Technology NEA. December 19th marks the deadline for the sections.

- Review of initial designs
- Development of designs
- Final Design
- Selection of materials

## Materials Update

Please can you start to discuss what materials your child will need to complete their final project. Students are required to provide their own materials for their GCSE projects. If the materials they require are readily available in School already, for example, MDF, Plywood, limited sizes of pine, etc then we can provide, but will be asking for a contribution payment for these. I am keen for the students to take responsibility for what they are making and what they need, so please can you start this discussion with them.

A reminder that we run a D&T extra catch-up every single Thursday lunch time in 201 on top of the 'prepare to perform' sessions.

# FOOD TECH

## NEA Update

Although the in lesson deadline for NEA 1 has passed, any students who missed any lessons due to absence are entitled to catch up on the hours missed. I am available in 209 on Thursday afternoons and in Prepare to Perform sessions to help you catch up on your missing hours.

NEA 2 is now in full swing and students are just about to take part in their first practical exam. There will be another practical exam in February to prepare for, but it is important to keep up to date with any missed NEA 2 lessons not to fall behind in your written portfolio.

## Practice Exam

Revision lists for the practice exams are available from 208 and if you have not collected your red revision guide for revision, please do so before the end of term to help revise over half term.



# PE

In the build-up to January exams, year 11 GCSE PE students will begin to look at past papers, which are available for collection from GCSE PE prepare to perform sessions. In the meantime, please find the 2018 paper via the link [here](#) and the mark scheme. We will be working through previous exams in the new year, in the build-up to May.

# MEDIA

Wow! What a term it has been already, with some absolutely fabulous practical work being produced in Media. Students have primarily been focused on completing their NEA and using the feedback provided, in line with AQA's feedback policy, to try and squeeze in those extra marks. A huge well done to those who have used their P2P time to continue working on their NEA - no doubt they will have seen the benefits of this.

The deadline is fast approaching (Friday 12th December) and it is important to remember that after this date, there will be no additional time to make improvements or adjustments.

I thank you for your continued support with the NEA and working together we have really enabled the students to create some truly outstanding work. Please continue to encourage P2P attendance as we have seen students be able to drastically increase their marks.

As we finish up the NEA element of the course, our attention will return back to the CSP study looking at Film (I, Daniel Black & Black Widow) before moving on to Newspaper study in the new year.

# MUSIC

In lessons we have recently finished looking at the Beethoven set work and started to revise content that we have previously looked at in the course. We have completed a past paper over a number of lessons and then gone over the answers to these questions, supporting students with their key vocabulary. In the final week of this term we have the NEA day in which students will be given time to work on compositions and performances, which make up 60% of their final grade.

All students are aware that they are able to work on their compositions from home using the [Flat.io](#) website, and those who are still yet to record their final performances should be practising these at home also.

# SCIENCE

It is once again possible to purchase revision guides on Parent Pay to be picked up from the preproom. Please note these are the same as the ones that were on sale last year so if your child already has them, there is no need to purchase again. The mock exams are fast approaching after Christmas, when students will sit all three Unit 2 papers. Revision resources will be available on Google Classroom to support preparation work in the lead-up to these exams. The key message to students is little and often and quizzing is the best way to revise.

# DANCE

## **Set Phrase NEA** - Thursday 11th December

Your next Dance NEA is on Thursday 11th of December. This will be your set phrase performances, Breathe and Flux. Please ensure that you have checked your time slot on Google Classroom.

You have been given permission to arrive at school in your dance kit and will need to leave your lesson 5 minutes before your allocated slot. Your teachers have been informed.

Please ensure that you are prepared with the following:

- Your dance kit - Black T-shirt and leggings or a leotard and tights.
- Hair up and out of your face, preferably a bun.
- No jewellery of any kind.

This is worth 15% of your overall grade and is your last performance that examines your performance skills; technical, physical and expressive.

Please make sure you are well-fueled and warmed up on the day.

Good Luck, you'll be amazing!

# DRAMA

Students completed a fantastic workshop with Frantic Assembly, where they learnt and experienced performance techniques from an internationally recognised theatre company. The following week, students watched 'Lost Atoms' by Frantic Assembly at the Mayflower, which was an inspiring and gripping performance.

Students will need to start focusing more on their 'Presenting and Performing' unit of work, which consists of their monologues and duologues. This is planned to be completed before May, but we are waiting for a confirmed examination date.



# RS

Remember that completing your self-study is a part of your revision for RS. You have access to your knowledge organisers, key quotation sheets and drop-in sessions to help you close any gaps in your knowledge or aid in structuring your independent revision.

A more visual resource for revision is [BBC Bitesize](#)

Please continue to utilise the drop in sessions :

Mrs Williams **Tuesday Break 1- 112**

Mrs Watson **Thursday Lunch- 112**

# ART

All students have had 1:1 and have been given feedback on their NEA coursework and have added notes in their sketchbook on what they need to do to improve. Students have until the 11th December to plan and organise materials for their mock exams on 'The 7 Deadly Sins' which will be held in rooms 202 and 203 on the 12th December, from 9am-3pm. Students will still be permitted to go to the usual break 1 & 2 but must return 5 minutes early to be ready to begin the exam timer.

Interventions are still available to any students who wish to continue with their artwork on Wednesday 3-4pm or Friday break 1 (20 minutes).

After the Christmas holidays art students will begin their Component 2 (Exam paper) and this will take 11 weeks to complete, followed by a 10 hour exam.

# IT

All students have now received their feedback for the NEA, and we will be back to improving in lesson time alongside p2p and break time drop-ins.

Please encourage attendance at drop-ins and p2p as this will increase their marks and overall grade for the coursework.

**The deadline is Thursday 11th December.**

Final grades will be given in the last week of term, so there will be no further time to improve their final piece of coursework (30% of the final mark).

If you have any concerns about your child's progress, please contact Miss Applegate at school as soon as possible.



# HEALTH AND WELLBEING

## Why is sleep important?

If we don't get enough sleep, we risk reducing our:

- decision-making skills
- memory
- concentration and efficiency
- alertness
- awareness and ability to respond effectively to situations
- reaction and thinking times.

'Sleep is that golden chain that ties health and our bodies together.'

Thomas Dekker

## How does this compare to the amount of sleep students are getting?

Students your age need around 10 hours sleep in order to perform at your very best and checking mobile, tablet and computer screens late at night can hinder this.

## How can we improve our quality of sleep?

- Avoid big changes to your sleep routine, such as lengthy lie-ins on weekends.
- Avoid doing work close to bed time so that your brain can 'wind down'.
- Avoid screens and stressful discussions/activities close to bedtime.
- Create a relaxing pre-bed routine, free from over-stimulation from screens, sugar and caffeine.
- Incorporate exercise into your day, but not too close to bedtime.
- Allow enough time in between dinner and sleep so that you aren't too full and your body won't be busy digesting food.
- Write down any thoughts or concerns to help avoid them 'buzzing' around your head.

## How can we 'wind down' before bed?

- Turn phones off!
- Have some alone time, listen to music, read a book (for enjoyment!) or relax doing yoga.
- Get some fresh air by taking a relaxing walk.
- Have a bath.



# REVISION STRATEGIES

One of the Brain Hacks in assemblies this term has been on the importance of students' thinking in lessons. 'Memory is the residue of thought', says cognitive psychologist Daniel Willingham, and he elaborates by telling us that we only remember what we think about. This has huge implications for what students do in a classroom. Those students who are thinking about the questions their teacher is asking and putting their hands up to respond or writing down their ideas... those pupils will more likely remember the important information than those who simply listen to others and write down what they've heard being said.

Our Second Year 11 Parent Coffee Morning will take place on:

**Date: Friday 12th December 2025**

**Time: 9.30 - 10.45**

**Location: The school Library**

**Theme: How to support your child preparing for the practice exams**

Your insights and involvement are invaluable as we work together to make this year successful, however we do appreciate the constraints of working parents and the slides and information will be sent out via our Prepare to Perform newsletter, should you not be able to make it.

**To help us arrange seating and refreshments, please complete the sign up on edulink**

Our future coffee mornings will be held on the following dates between 9.45-10.45

**Thursday 5th February - How to support your child's health and Wellbeing during Year 11**

**Friday 20th March - How to support your child's resilience during the final term**