



RESILIENCE THROUGH EXAMS

Exam Preparation and Coping with Anxiety

As the exam period approaches and pressure begins to mount, it is not unusual for student anxiety levels to increase as they start to feel overwhelmed. Whilst anxious feelings are understandable, it's important to be aware of the impact anxiety can have. Ultimately, knowing how to respond to anxious feelings will help keep students calm and collected during exam season.

To help teach students about mental health and how to cope during exams, Britannica's Curriculum Expert Team has put together this e-book, which includes:

Two ready-to-use classroom lessons, paired with complementary worksheets, focusing on the importance of mental health and coping with anxiety

Print-ready worksheets to build resiliency skills and to help organise exam prep

Activities and resources for students and families

Advice and guidance on how to prepare for exams and cope with the stress it brings

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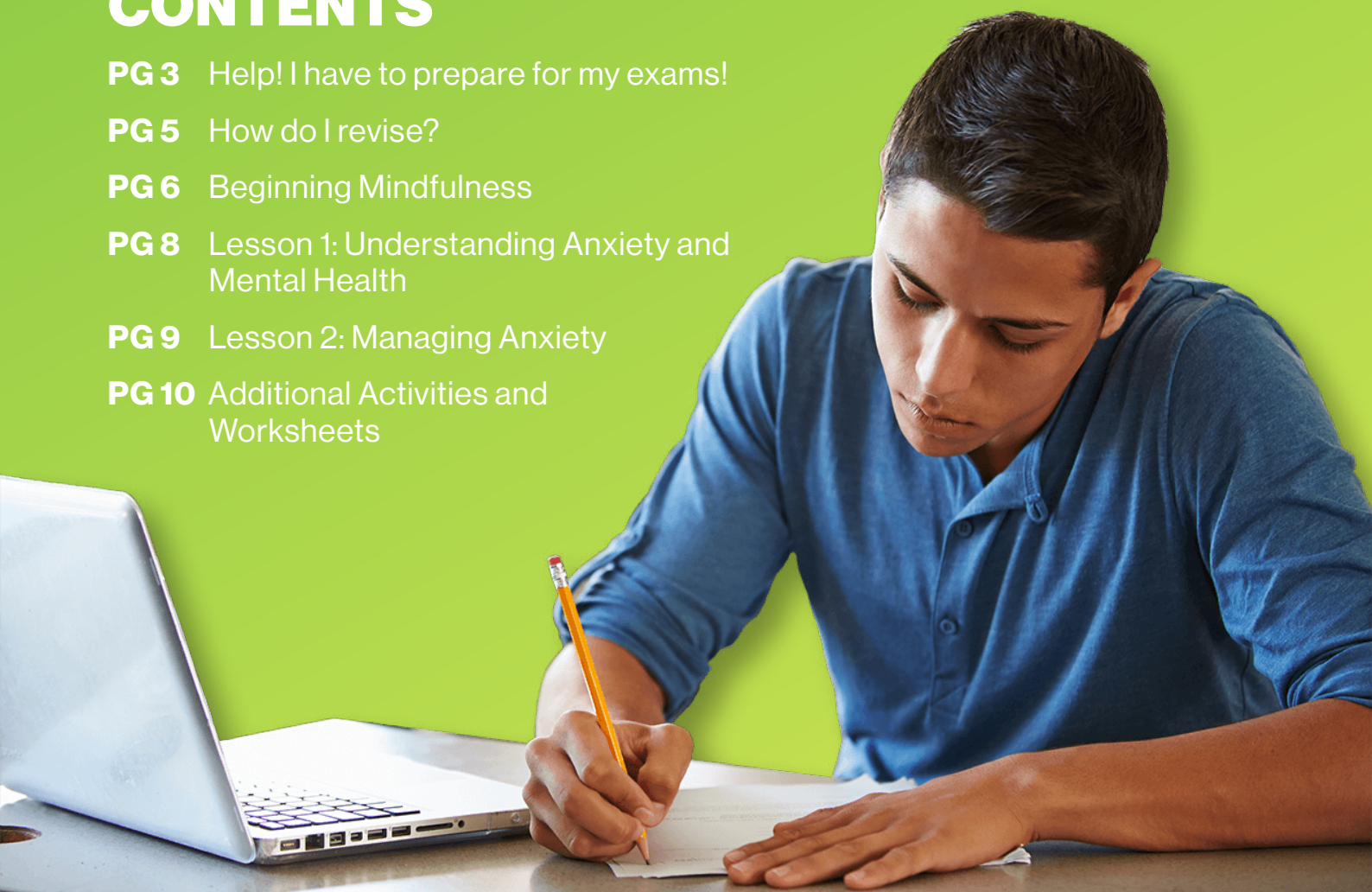
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Help! I have to prepare for my exams!

Tips on Where to Start and How to Prioritise

It is no secret that the exam period is a stressful and testing time. It can be overwhelming and feel like quite the balancing act when you are trying to tackle all of the extra workload, and added pressure!

We want to identify certain things that can help you relieve some of this stress and guide you when it comes to organising your time effectively. Hopefully, following these tips will result in exam preparation being carried out as smoothly as possible, therefore giving you the opportunity to get the outcome you want and deserve!

So what can you do?

Create Lists

Writing a 'to-do' list will help you clarify what you need to do and how you can prioritise these tasks, giving a sense of organisation to your workload. To start, create a list of all the revision and homework you have to complete, followed by deadlines for each. To be more concise with this, you could create separate lists for each subject, jotting down which topics you need to focus on in particular.

For guidance, use our 'My To-Do List' template! [Click here to download.](#)



Ask Yourself Questions

Take time to evaluate your workload in order to plan next steps, and ask yourself the following:

- What areas of my revision do I need to focus more on?
- Where do my strengths lie and how will I enhance these?
- How much time do I realistically need to give myself?
- Which approach am I going to use to revise?

Prioritise Tasks and Set Deadlines

Once you have identified which areas you are stronger or weaker in and what you need to cover or complete, label each task with a level of importance and set a deadline. You can start by colour-coding the tasks and writing a note for yourself. You can see an example below:

Algebra revision

- Very important because I am not confident in this topic (deadline: June 8th)

Reread English Literature text

- Only if I have the capacity as I have already read it three times (deadline: May 25th)

Finish Art assignment

- Important but deadline is later than others (deadline: June 21st)

The image shows a 'My Revision Timetable' template from The Britannica. It consists of two identical weekly grids. Each grid has columns for the days of the week (Monday to Sunday) and rows for the time of day (TIME). Below the grids, there are fields for 'Name' and 'Date'. The Britannica logo is in the top right corner.

After taking the time to label your priorities and identify deadlines, you can begin to put a homework and revision timetable together to help organise your time!

Use our 'My Revision Timetable' template for assistance! [Click here to download.](#)

Take Regular Breaks

Remind yourself to take regular breaks. According to neuroscience research, taking a short rest following a learning activity helps strengthen memory consolidation. In a study of healthy volunteers, National Institutes of Health researchers found that 'our brains may solidify the memories of new skills we just practised a few seconds earlier by taking a short rest. The results highlight the critically important role rest may play in learning' (NIH/NINDS, 2019).

Set an alarm on your phone so that every 30–40 minutes, you are taking a break from your work!

Self-Identify Emotions and Feelings

Taking care of our mental health during stressful and pressuring times is imperative! Be aware of your feelings. If you are starting to experience constant agitation, restlessness, feelings of frustration or inability to focus anymore, you need to take a substantial break from your work and leave the environment you are working in.

For more information on how to cope with anxiety and stress, see [the lessons in this booklet.](#)

Remember, you are not alone in this journey! And remind yourself that you have some control over your workload and how you manage it; make the choices that work best for you. Managing your work and stress levels in an organised and healthy manner is going to be the key for succeeding.

How do I revise?

The Types of Learners and Revision Methods

A big downfall for students when preparing for exams is not knowing how to revise and therefore, running out of time to prepare effectively. This is because everyone learns differently; each individual will have a preferred revision method which works for them and helps them retain information. The challenge can be discovering which revision methods work for you!

Britannica's Curriculum Experts have identified the three different types of learners and what method works best for these individuals. **It is worth noting that you do not have to be one type of learner so take the time to identify how you learn best and experiment with the revision methods below to find what works best for you!**

Visual Learners

If you are a visual learner, you will learn through sight. This can include reading information or scanning images. Visual learners are usually attracted to colour and can be creative with their work.

Below are some of the revision methods you can experiment with if you think you are more of a visual learner.

- Using mindmaps
- Studying flashcards
- Making diagrams
- Colour-coding notes
- Writing key words/ points
- Practicing past papers

Auditory Learners

If you are an auditory learner, you will learn through your sense of hearing. Whether this is by listening to someone speak or to music, sound is your learning tool. Auditory learners will often love music and remember words to songs quickly!

Below are some of the revision methods you can experiment with if you think you are more of an auditory learner.

- Explaining a concept aloud
- Asking someone to test you out loud
- Listening to music whilst revising
- Teaching someone else
- Using mnemonics
- Listening to audiobooks

Kinesthetic Learners

If you are a kinesthetic learner, you will learn through touch and movement. This can be through practical experiments, building tasks or just movement of the body. These learners tend to have a natural athletic ability and good coordination.

Below are some of the revision methods you can experiment with if you think you are more of a kinesthetic learner.

- Teaching someone else
- Practicing past papers
- Using rhythmic motions, like clicking your fingers, when reading
- Taking part in experiments
- Studying flashcards

Beginning Mindfulness

Practising Mindfulness During the Exam Period

The next part is going to look at the stress that comes with exams, exploring mental health and what you can do to cope with anxious feelings.

So first, ask yourself: Have you ever woken up with a feeling of anticipation or a sense of feeling overwhelmed or stressed? Well, the good news is that there are simple practices that can help reduce stress and help you sleep better after a challenging and heavy-workload day.

Much research has shown that the well-known practice of mindfulness is an effective way to reduce stress, increase attention span, and help you go to sleep with a sense of calmness.

Meditation

1. Find a comfortable, quiet, and peaceful place (e.g., garden or bedroom). Sit in a comfortable upright position, with your spine straight and your legs crossed or straight out. Fold your hands in your lap or place them on your knees, whichever is most comfortable. Use a cushion or yoga mat for added comfort.
2. Relax and loosen your body, starting with your forehead, then your jaw and mouth. Move down to your shoulders, relaxing your arms, then your belly, hips, and legs.
3. Take slow deep breaths. Focus on breathing in and breathing out. Count to three on each inhale, hold for another three seconds, then exhale out for three seconds.
4. Pay quiet attention to each of your senses. After a few deep breath cycles, ask yourself: "What can I hear at this moment? Can I smell anything? What can I taste?"
5. Acknowledge each passing thought, and then let the thought go, focusing on just the present moment.

You can also add soft, calming sounds as you meditate, to enhance the practice. Playing soft, soothing music can trigger the release of hormones that help improve mood. Feeling emotionally at peace can also help the body feel calmer, too.

Showing Gratitude

Gratitude is good for your emotional health and your happiness, and it sends positive messages to your body. Scientists, researchers, and mental health professionals have studied gratitude's positive effects on our minds and bodies. One study showed that those who were feeling appreciative or grateful had increased activity in their hypothalamus, the area of the brain that releases the "feel good" neurotransmitters, like serotonin and dopamine, and the part of the brain that controls many essential bodily functions necessary for good health, including sleep, eating, and drinking. In other words, when

you feel grateful, you experience synchronized activation of many parts of your brain, causing positive effects on both your mind and your body!

You can start expressing gratitude by creating your own gratitude journal. Be as creative as you wish - use colours, draw pictures or use images. But the most important part is to write down 3 things that you are grateful for - such as family, health or pets - for that day. Take a look at [Britannica's gratitude worksheet for guidance](#).

What are you grateful for?	Why?	How do you show gratitude for it?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Sources
Sansone, R. A., & Sansone, L. A. (2010). Gratitude and well being: The benefits of appreciation. *Psychiatry*, 7(11), 18–21.

Shield Snap Cards

Practise using these power words alone or with a friend, parent or a person you trust, to help shield you the next time you face stressful situations.

The next time you or a friend feels like screaming or feels angry, sad, worried or frustrated, try using these power words to help you get through these feelings.

[Download the Shield Snap Cards](#)

Shield Snap Cards

Feeling tense is natural. It tells me it is time to use power words as my coping strategies.



If someone hurt my feelings, when I'm calm and feel ready, tell the person how their action made me feel.

Fighting this doesn't help, so I'll just relax and breathe deeply and let it float away.

By relaxing through these feelings, I learn to face my fears.

I can feel anxious and still deal with this situation.

Things are not as bad as I think they are.

This is not a real emergency. I can slow down and think about what I need to do.



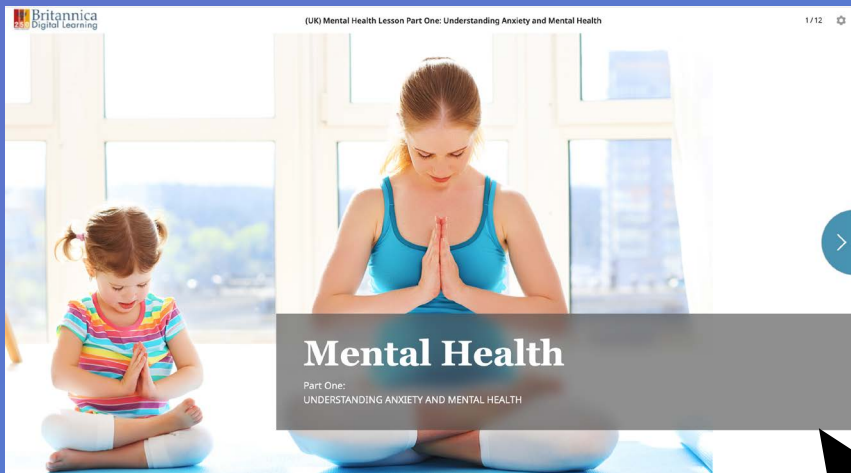
LESSON ONE

Understanding Anxiety and Mental Health

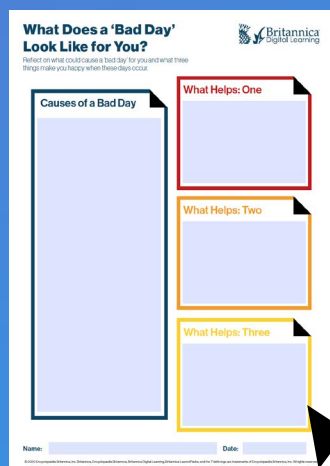
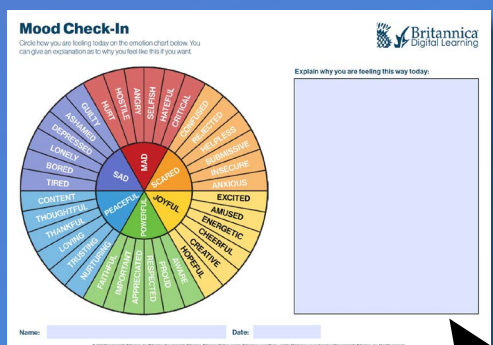
ABOUT THE LESSON

This lesson is designed to help children understand what mental health and anxiety mean and their importance. It aims to introduce young people to the practice of reflecting on their emotions and being mindful of their mental state. They will become aware of mental health terminology, have discussions, and understand what it means to "reflect" on their feelings.

LESSON SLIDES



SUPPORTING RESOURCES



LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Identify the meaning of mental health and anxiety
- Recognise and label your emotions and feelings experienced during stressful periods
- Understand the importance of mental health and why we need to raise awareness

INCLUDED IN THE LESSON

- 1 Learning Outcomes
- 2 Key Vocabulary
- 3 Reflection: *Mood Check-In*
- 4 Discussion Task: *Physical Health vs. Mental Health*
- 5 What is meant by 'mental health'?
- 6 Reflection: *What does a 'bad day' look like for you?*
- 7 What is anxiety?
- 8 What causes anxiety?
- 9 Anxiety Quiz
- 10 Learning Outcomes

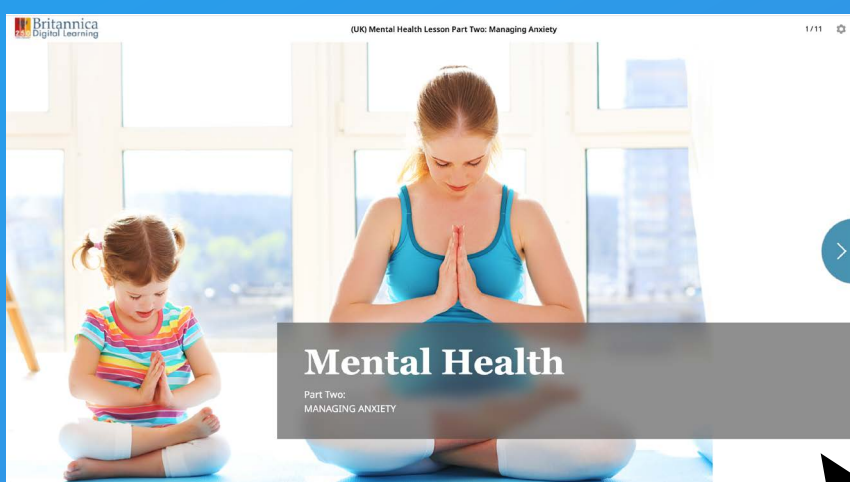
LESSON TWO

Managing Anxiety

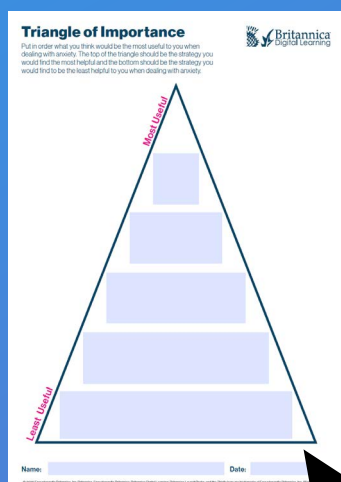
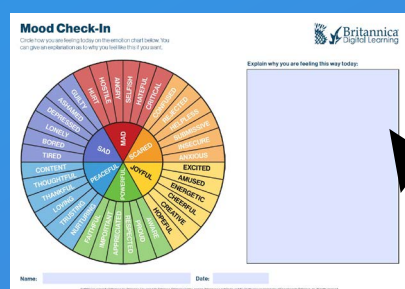
ABOUT THE LESSON

This lesson is a continuation of the knowledge gained in Lesson One. It focuses on managing emotions during stressful times and learning about strategies that may prevent, or help reduce, anxiety as students continue to reflect on their feelings.

LESSON SLIDES



SUPPORTING RESOURCES



LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Recognise and label your emotions and feelings experienced during stressful periods
- Understand that there is a connection between your thoughts, feelings and actions
- Identify strategies to help manage your emotions during stressful situations to better your mental health and help others

INCLUDED IN THE LESSON

- 1 Learning Outcomes
- 2 Reflection: *Mood Check-In*
- 3 Managing Your Emotions
- 4 Discussion Task: *Describing Feelings*
- 5 What can we do to help anxiety?
- 6 Reflection: *Anxiety Triangle*
- 7 Discussion Task: *Helping someone who is worried*
- 8 Reflection: *Mood Check-In*
- 9 Learning Outcomes
- 10 Additional Resources: *Never Stop Learning with Britannica*

Additional Activities and Worksheets

Scenarios

Read the following scenarios and answer the questions that follow:

Brian just found out that he failed his test. He slams his books on the floor and yells at his friend who asked if he was okay.

Julie accidentally shared her best friend's secret with another friend. She begins crying, beats herself up and won't forgive herself for days.

Shawn doesn't like science class because he feels his teacher dislikes him because his grades are low, so he caves in his chair each lesson, making sure not to participate in class and sometimes doesn't show up to class.

1. Do you think any of these people managed their emotions in a healthy way? Explain your answer.

2. If you were to meet each of these people, describe a healthy solution you could share with them that will better help them manage their emotions.

Name:

Date:

Imagine if...

1. Someone close to you (e.g., a brother/sister, parent, friend) has hurt your feelings. What can you say and/or do? Use the five activities suggested in Lesson 2 and the power words from the [Shield Snap Cards](#) to help you.

2. You have a test coming up and feel a flood of anxiety. What activity can you do and what power words can you use to calm yourself?

3. Someone lied to you about something, and it made you feel hurt and betrayed. How can you handle this? What activity can you do and what power words can help you get through your feelings?

4. If you had a friend struggling with something, what ideas could you share to help them cope? Share some of the things that you have learned from the Shield Snap Cards or the five activities suggested in Lesson 2.

Name:

Date:

OPTION 1

Create a poster informing your peers about the importance of mental health.

OPTION 2

Create a PowerPoint presentation explaining what anxiety is and how we can ease it.

OPTION 3

Based on what you have learnt about mental health and anxiety, write an informal letter to a friend explaining why mental health is an important topic to discuss and learn about in school.

Kahoot! Quizzes

Click on the links below to test what you have learnt about mental health and anxiety!

FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

QUIZ 1

FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

QUIZ 2

FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

QUIZ 3

FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

QUIZ 4