

# How to ace GCSEs and A-levels: tips for pupils *and parents*



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**5th Feb, 2018**

# Preparation is everything



**Keep your eye on the prize!**



# Choosing GCSE subjects

- What gives me joy? **(where am I naturally motivated?)**
- What am I good at? **(ask others/online tools)**
- Which subjects show off my strengths? **(How can I shine?)**
- What is taught well? **(am I going to be supported here?)**
- What are my goals and dreams? **(for now)**

Rem: the importance of English and maths!

# A-levels: going for gold



# College, University or Apprenticeship?

## Differences:

Type of experience

Population of students

Costs

Teaching methods

Levels of prestige

Levels of support



Which suits your ability and long-term goals?

# The birth of aspiration



Think about the view from the top!





**Terry wanted a house with two toilets**



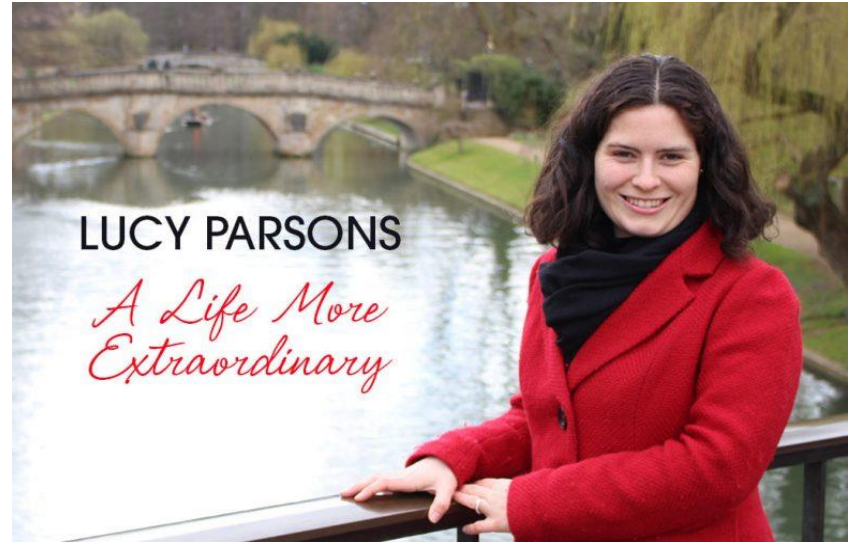
# Pat discovers Oxford...



# Mark regrets not going to uni...



# Find a role model



# Relish challenge

“Many people choose to remain comfortably within the bounds of their own experience, never troubling to wonder how it would feel to be other than they are”.



# Ask yourself.....



# Get organised!



# 'Have you got GRIT?'



*“The commitment to finish what you start, to rise from setbacks, to want to improve and succeed, and to undertake sustained and sometimes unpleasant practice in order to do so”.*







**You need 8-9 hours of sleep per school night.**

Is your bedroom sleep-friendly?

Are you getting regular exercise/eating well?

What is keeping you from sleep?

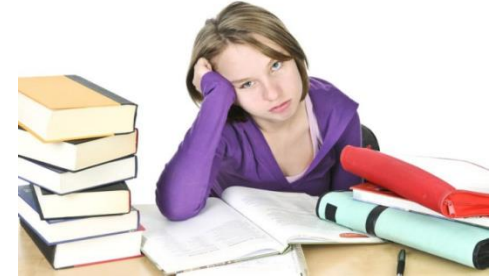
# Optimal parenting (exam season)



# Home Learning Environments



# Effective revision



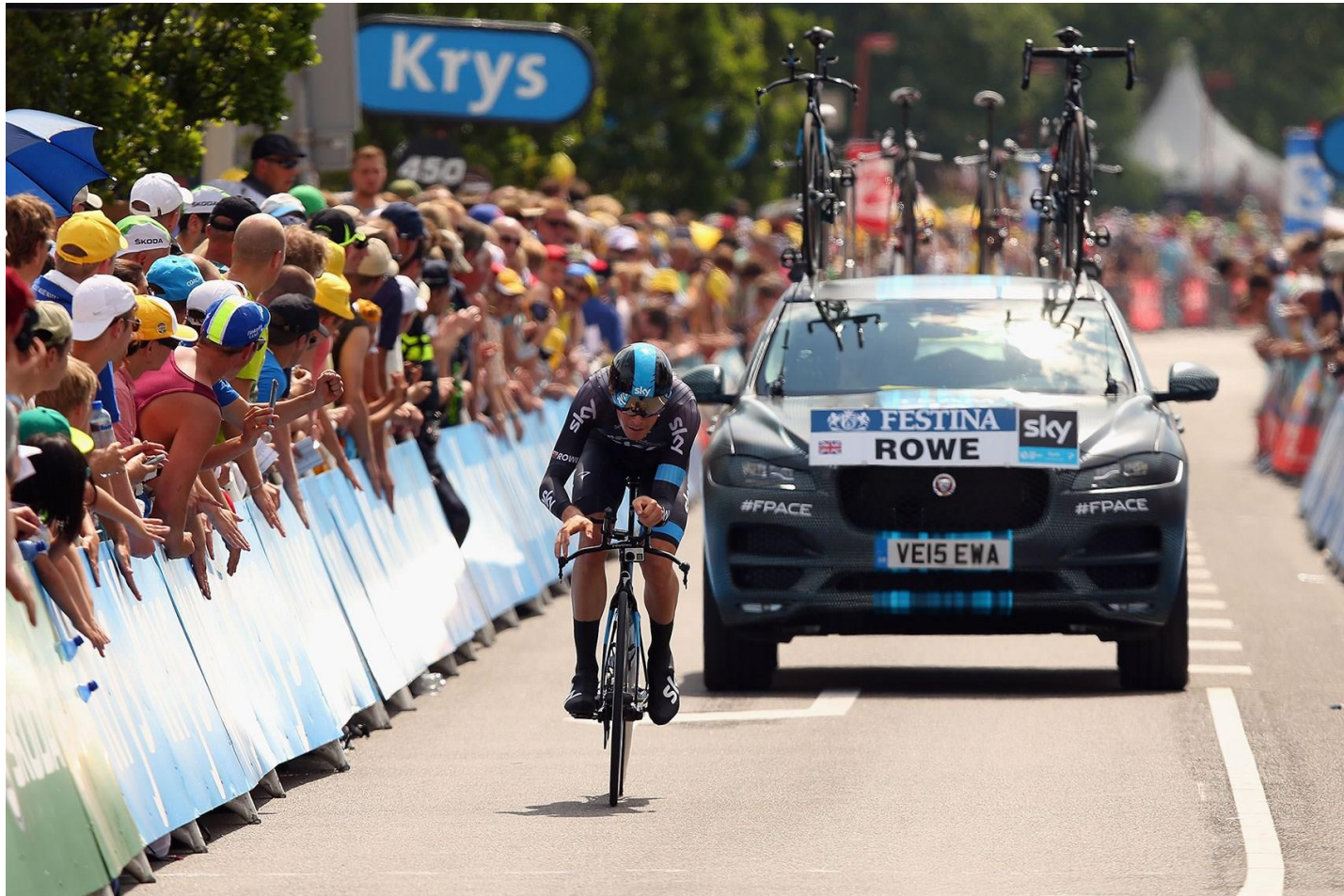
- ✓ Prepare as much as you can first (like cooking!)
- ✓ Ensure you have tried past papers
- ✓ Space revision out
- ✓ Focus on what you don't know
- ✓ Can I recall it? Do I really understand it?
- ✓ Refine your knowledge gradually
- ✓ Memorising comes last...
- ✓ Attend revision sessions/get resources/advice to assist on weak areas.

# Parents/carers....

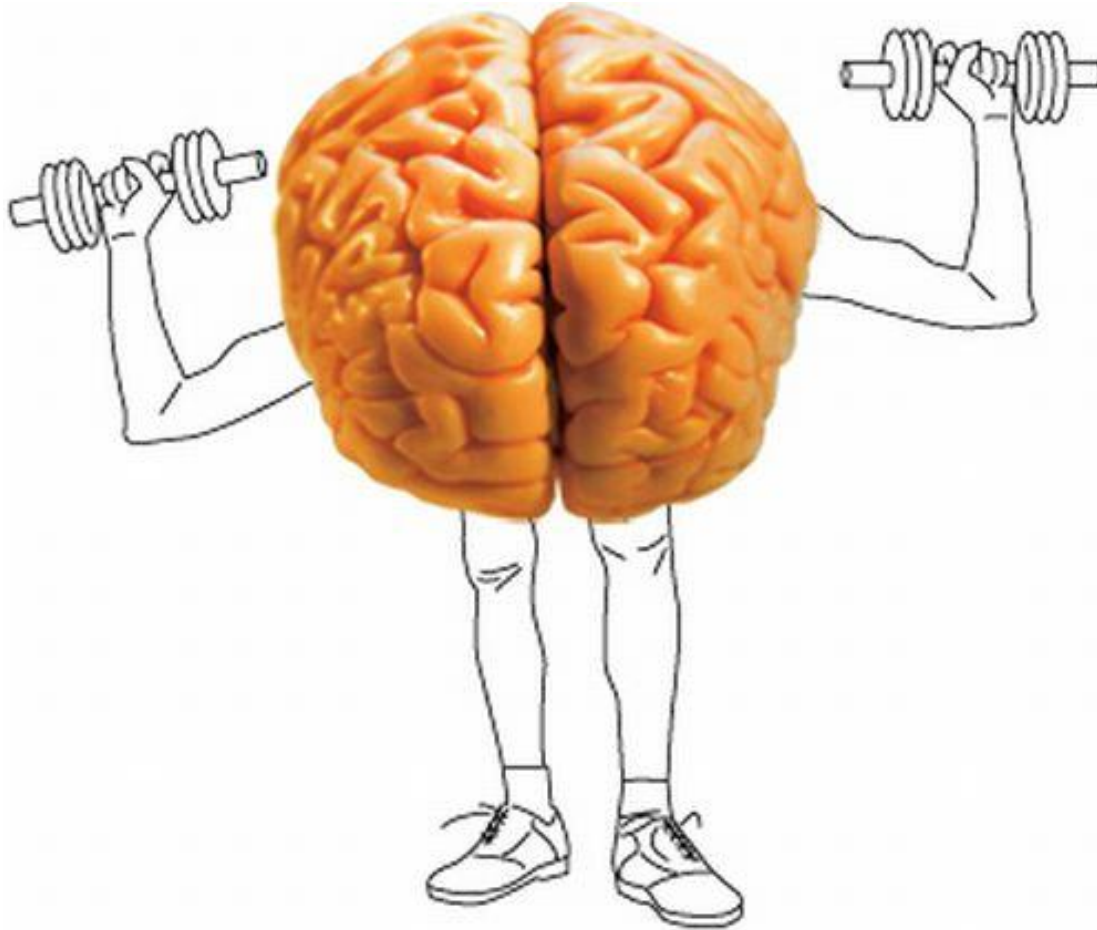
- Ask them what helps/hinders them
- Develop an *agreed revision routine*
- **Help them** get organised
- Offer **treats** at the end of study tasks.
- Encourage creative approaches to revision
- Support them when they say they are struggling
- Help them **chart their progress**
- Ask them to teach you something..
- Create opportunities for laughter!
- Tell them you love them, are proud of them and that you are **in it together**.



# Success requires...support



# Staying mentally fit



# Resilience





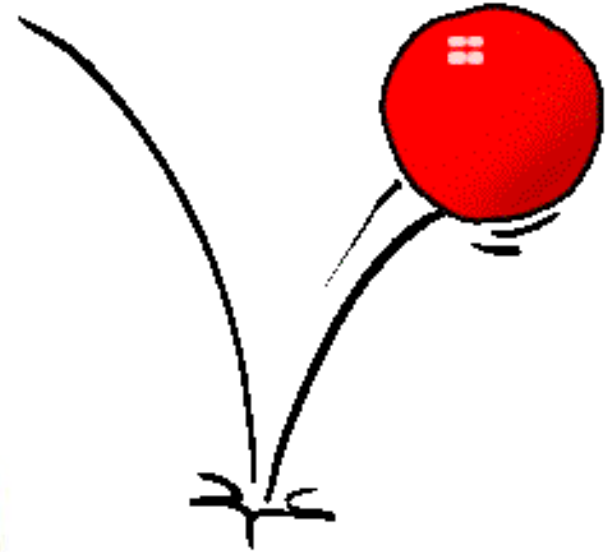
# Talking MATTERS



# Sharing failure MATTERS



# Learn from it... & bounce back





# Self-presentation MATTERS



# Digital hygiene MATTERS



**CAUTION**

**TOXIC WASTE**

**INSIDE**

# Managing Distractions



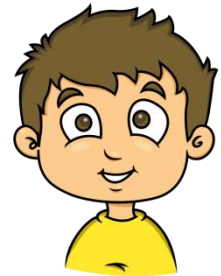
# CVs: evidence of your brilliance

## Personal statement

I am very motivated and I try to help people learn. I have a large sense of humour and like to work in teams.

## School achievements

- Recipient of Academic Scholarship Overall winner - Junior poetry performance prize (2016), winner in age category (2015)
- Star of the Term 20/11/14
- LAMDA entry level award in communication (Distinction)
- Under 9 A Rugby Team member
- Grade 4 Singing exam with merit (ABRSM exams)
- Grade 2 piano Long jump 1st prize winner, 2015, 2016
- Chapel Choir (senior chorister)
- Sports Day: winner of three events)
- Recipient of Junior Music Cup, 2015, 2016 Silver medallist in St Albans Athletics club championships 2015 (breaking club record in one event)
- Performed in public (Charity choir concert)
- Recipient Junior Drama prize 2016 (joint)
- Pangbourne Poetry Winner (first place for poetry performance) (2017)







# Girl persuades supermarket to stop selling caged hen eggs

18 July 2016 Last updated at 07:26 BST

**Tesco supermarket bosses have said that they will stop selling eggs laid by caged hens, following pressure from a young animal welfare campaigner.**

Fourteen-year-old Lucy said that keeping hens in cages is cruel, because they don't have enough space to move around or stretch their wings.

She asked the supermarket to stop selling cage eggs so that much

## Related video / audio



▶ 0:23  
Chicken chase on China motorway  
28 January 2014



▶ 0:23  
Chicken adopts 'Lucky' duckling  
2 May 2014



▶ 0:24  
The chickens wearing hi-vis  
7 January 2014

## Best video / audio



▶ 6:00  
Watch Newsround  
2 hours ago



▶ 1:17  
The week's weirdest news stories  
28 October 2016



▶ 1:22  
What does an eSports player do?  
29 October 2016

Show More

# Big picture thinking



Harness your **natural resources**

What can you **DO now?**

What is your **USP?**

Don't follow, **lead!**

Love to **learn**

**Be the boss** of your own destiny.

Build **positive connections** in the world

Be fearless, fail, try, succeed!



# Exam season



- ✓ Remember how much effort you have put in
- ✓ Be equipped
- ✓ Keep focused
- ✓ You against the examiner.
- ✓ Avoid distractions
- ✓ One page at exam door

# Tips for parents: the 7As



- Authoritative** parenting is optimal.
- Attune** to their interests and talents
- Aspirations** need to be high but *realistic*.
- Applaud effort** rather than success
- Advocate** on their behalf
- Avoid** financial incentives
- Always nudge**, never push

# Exams: tiny step on giant journey



# Follow me



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[www.drkathyweston.com](http://www.drkathyweston.com)