Help your child remember and use what they learn

Visual learning guide - Maths, English and Science · Parent guide · School-age learners

Try a small recall task, check it together and revisit the idea with a fresh example. Keep the existing printable planner or use the new PDF practice.

Start with the key idea

Ask the child to recall or explain a small piece of learning before reopening the notes, then check and correct it. Revisit it later and try a different example. Forgetting helps identify what needs another explanation; it is not a reason to label the child or repeatedly test a whole chapter.

Recognising a page is different from retrieving an idea

A familiar worked solution can feel easy while it is visible. Covering it and explaining the first step is a different task. Begin with a small, recently taught idea rather than testing an entire chapter unexpectedly.

Ask the child what they remember, let them draw or speak, then use a reliable source to check. If they remember very little, shorten the task and reteach the missing idea. Repeated unsupported guessing is not the aim.

Do not promise that one timetable will solve every memory difficulty. Prior knowledge, vocabulary, understanding and the conditions of study all affect what a child can explain later. Persistent concerns deserve a conversation with the teacher.

Use the recall-check-revisit cycle

1. Choose: name one idea, such as equivalent units in a measurement problem or the role of plant roots.

2. Recall: close the explanation and ask for a short answer, sketch or demonstration.

3. Check: reopen the lesson. Identify what is right and repair one missing or mistaken part.

4. Explain: ask why the corrected answer makes sense, rather than copying it repeatedly.

5. Revisit: try again on a later day using another example.

A possible starting schedule is today, a day or two later, and again the following week. Adjust it: an idea that remains difficult needs explanation and an earlier revisit; a secure idea can wait longer. These intervals are an example, not a universal formula.

Maths example: an answer and a check

After learning division, ask: What is 42 ÷ 6, and how can you check? A complete response is 7, because 6 × 7 = 42. If the child says 8, use groups or a known multiplication fact to check: 6 × 8 = 48, which is too many.

Later ask: "There are 35 counters in five equal groups. How many are in each group?" The answer is 7. This new wording checks whether the idea travels beyond the first number sentence. If the child recalls "seven" without explaining the new grouping, return to a drawing.

A useful record says "found the quotient but needed a multiplication check", not simply "division done". Link the difficult part to our equal-groups guide and practise a fresh example after the explanation.

English and Science examples

English: after reading the paper-boat story in our comprehension guide, ask for the main event and a clue explaining Meera's choice of the bowl. Check against the actual words. A child who remembers a vivid pebble detail but not the reason for testing indoors needs help connecting events, not only more repetition.

Science: after learning about dissolving, ask, "When salt dissolves, has it stopped existing?" A suitable explanation is that it remains in the water in particles too small to see individually. Check the lesson rather than accepting "it disappeared" as a complete scientific explanation.

On the later revisit, change the format: use a drawing with labels, explain to a family member or compare two proposed answers. Keep the idea the same while changing how the child encounters it.

Plan a few useful revisits

Use the printable sheet for three ideas, not every fact in a textbook. Write a question that has a checkable answer and name the source you will use to verify it. "Revise Science" is too broad; "explain what changes when salt dissolves" is clearer.

After the attempt, choose "explain again", "revisit soon" or "try a new application". Avoid turning the sheet into a public ranking or rewarding only perfect recall. Keep a mistaken answer long enough to explain the correction, then move on.

If a child can remember a method but cannot decide when to use it, provide contrasting examples. For instance, sharing 24 objects between four people and making groups of four both involve division, but the answer describes a different thing. Understanding the question matters as much as recalling a fact.

Further reading: Milton Keynes City Council: practical revision approaches . The examples and printable activities on this page were created by BananaLearn.

Recall, check and revisit planner

Choose three small ideas. Try recalling before looking, then check using the named lesson or book. Dates are flexible.

A completed example

Question to recall: 42 ÷ 6: explain and check

Where to check: Division lesson

What needs repair: Use 6 × 7 = 42 to check

Next revisit: Choose a later day

Opens a separate sheet with the completed example and writing space. Save it as a PDF or print it using your browser. No account is required.

Check whether the idea works in a fresh situation

A familiar question can become a memory cue for its answer. After an initial recall-and-check cycle, change the numbers or the context while keeping the underlying skill. Ask the child to explain how they recognised it.

For example, after sharing 24 counters among four groups, ask how many groups of four can be made from 28 counters. Both use division, but the unknown describes something different. Let the child draw the groups and name what the answer counts.

Keep the check small. If the learner cannot explain the original idea, return to teaching rather than making the new task harder. Record the help used so a supported answer is not mistaken for independent recall.

3 worked examples with reasoning

1. A child recalls 42 ÷ 6 as 8. What next?

1. Use multiplication or equal groups to check: 6 × 8 = 48, not 42.

2. Explain that seven groups of six make 42, then let the child show the relationship.

3. Revisit later with a fresh example rather than repeatedly demanding the same answer.

2. A child says dissolved salt has stopped existing.

1. Check the explanation against the lesson: the salt remains in the water.

2. Use a labelled particle sketch or a reliable explanation to repair the idea; do not accept the everyday phrase "disappeared" without clarification.

3. Later ask the child to explain a different dissolving example. No home experiment is required.

3. The child rereads an answer and says "I know that".

1. Ask for one small explanation with the answer covered.

2. Use the response to choose whether to explain again, revisit soon or try a new application.

3. Familiarity and independent explanation are different observations.

Use the ideas without looking at the notes

Three-idea plan: Idea and question ___. Source for checking ___. First response ___. Correction explained ___. Later fresh question ___. Help used ___.

The original printable planner remains available in the resource section. Use whichever format is easiest to maintain, and keep the work private.

Common questions

Should we stop rereading?

No. Reading helps with understanding and checking. Add a small recall attempt to see what can be explained without the page.

Is forgetting always a problem?

Some forgetting is ordinary. Persistent difficulties affecting learning should be discussed with the school.

Should we test the whole topic every day?

Start with a few important ideas and adapt. Large repeated tests can crowd out explanation, rest and other learning.

What if a child remembers the method but chooses it wrongly?

Compare contrasting problems and ask which relationship each requires. Formula recall and method selection are different skills.

Connect your learning

- Use work samples to review tutoring
- Support reading comprehension
- Explore sharing and grouping
- Turn revision into useful practice
- Plan manageable review sessions

Ask about guided Maths, English and Science learning if your child needs help explaining these ideas.

About this guide

Original explanations, examples, diagrams and practice by BananaLearn. The grade label indicates the intended learning level; this is not an official textbook extract or exam paper.

- Milton Keynes City Council: practical revision approaches

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Practice worksheet - Maths, English and Science · Parent guide · School-age learners

Name: _____ Date: _____

Show your working. Answers and explanations follow on a separate page.

Try each question before opening its explanation. Show the calculation, evidence or reasoning that supports your answer.

Write an answer and your reason before opening the explanation. Check the reasoning as well as the final answer.

1. Replace "revise Maths" with one checkable task.

2. How can 48 ÷ 6 = 8 be checked?

3. Twenty-eight counters form groups of four. What does seven count?

4. A child copies a correct explanation. What remains to be checked?

5. Why ask for a clue from a passage when reviewing an inference?

6. Does dissolved salt cease to exist?

7. Must every idea use the same revisit interval?

8. What should a record say if a diagram was supplied?

9. Choose one idea and write where you will check the answer.

10. What is a useful response when very little is recalled?

Answers and explanations

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1. Example: explain why 35 ÷ 5 = 7 and show a multiplication check.

A small named task makes feedback possible.

2. 6 × 8 = 48.

Multiplication rebuilds the starting quantity.

3. Seven groups.

The unknown is the number of groups, not the counters in each group.

4. Whether they can explain or apply it independently later.

Copying can support review but does not establish independent recall.

5. To connect the answer to evidence in the text.

A plausible guess may not be supported by this passage.

6. No; it remains in the water.

The particles are too small to see individually in the solution.

7. No. Adjust to what the learner can explain and the time available.

The example schedule is a starting point, not a universal prescription.

8. Note that the response used a supplied diagram.

This distinguishes that support from drawing and explaining one independently.

9. Use the relevant lesson, textbook or teacher-provided explanation.

Feedback needs an accurate reference, not only confidence in an answer.

10. Shorten the task and explain the missing idea again.

Repeated unsupported guessing is not the aim.