

Exam Strategies

A Short Introduction

Exams can be very stressful and difficult. This short guide outlines how to be well prepared for your next assessment. Presented by Ultimate Maths.

Before the Exam

Revision

Revision is probably the most important aspect of good exam preparation. To acquire all the knowledge and skills needed, you have to find the revision technique that best suits you. Here are a few examples:

- Flash Cards
- Summarising notes
- Revision guides
- Revision videos

No matter which revision technique(s) you prefer the general stages to successful revision are the same.

Firstly, **plan your revision**. Ideally, create a revision timetable. Make sure you spend a sufficient amount of time on all subjects and topics. Inform your family and friends when you plan to revise so that they do not plan anything that conflicts with your plan.

Secondly, **start your revision**. Go through and summarise your notes and convert them into the revision format you use (example: flash cards). Depending on if you are a visual learner, it may be good to transform some notes into a graphical format. Study in a place which is quiet, comfortable and well lit, away from any distractions. Go through your summarised notes repeatedly and try to learn them. After you feel relatively confident, ask someone to test you or test yourself. Then check how you did and concentrate revision on the topics you still struggle with.

Thirdly, in the final stages of your revision. You should be feeling pretty confident about most of the topics. You should now be targeting the topics you struggle with and only look at the other topics from time to time to ensure that you don't forget them.

Pre-Exam Preparation

This phase usually starts on the evening before your exam. By now you should have done all your revision and be pretty much ready for the exam. It is very important to behave correctly in the last 24 hours prior to the test.

Stay Focused

During your revision, it is very important to **stay focused**. Do not watch TV or surf the internet while revising. It is better to concentrate fully on your revision and then take short breaks regularly. Avoid any distractions until you have finished.

What you should do:

- Look over your summarised notes a last time. Especially the topics you have struggled with.
- Eat a good meal and drink a lot.
- Try not to get stressed out about your exam. Think about the fact that you have revised everything and that you know that you are ready.
- Go to bed early. You should get a lot of sleep so that you can perform your best the next day.

What you shouldn't do:

- Don't revise until late into the night. You should have already revised sufficiently. Just review the essential topics or topics that you have recently struggled with.
- Don't be stressed. This is harder than it sounds. Just try to stay calm knowing that you have revised everything.
- Don't party! This one is pretty obvious but it's pretty important that you avoid partying or anything else that could affect your brain negatively before an exam.

After you wake up in the morning, get ready as usual. Before the exam, make sure that you stay hydrated and try not to stress. If your exam is in the afternoon, make sure you have had lunch before.

During the Exam

In the exam room, find a spot that you feel comfortable in and get ready. Put your pen(s) and everything else you will need on the table and wait until the exam is given out.

Write your name on the paper and any other information that is required. Sounds obvious but a lot of students forget it because they are stressed. When you are allowed to open your exam, it is recommended that you read through the questions. This should allow you to manage your time better and identify questions that will give you the most points. In most exams, you are allocated reading time to do this.

Start the exam when the teacher instructs you to do so. Try to follow the pointers below:

- Work quickly but accurately. Try not to make any silly errors.
- Read the questions correctly. Pick out important data and instructions and don't miss anything that you need to answer the questions. Also look out for instructions on how to go about the question or in what format to write the answer.
- When you can't answer a question or you are stuck, just skip it. You can come back to it later. Just don't skip all the questions that you can't immediately solve.
- When you are done, don't hand in the exam immediately. Take all the time to check your answers. Over and over again if you have the time. You often find lots of silly mistakes that will save you valuable points.

After the time is up hand in your exam.

After the Exam

When your exam is over you should be happy with yourself that you have done it. Try not to stress about your grade. Your result is often better than you expect. Even if your result ends up not being too good, it's usually not the end of the world. There are other exams that you can do well in.

Conclusion

We hope that this short guide to exam strategies has helped you to do well in your exams. Of course, these are only guidelines. You should try to adapt these strategies to fit your needs. Maybe some of them don't work too well for you. You should experiment to see what your secret to exam success is. Good Luck!