

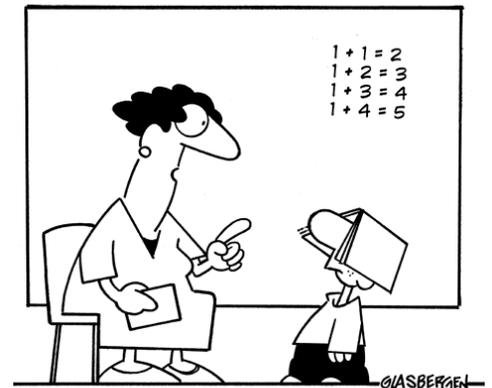
TOP TIPS

BEFORE THE EXAMS

- Know your exam timetable – highlight yours in colour and put them on your calendar.
- Know where and when you need to be and give yourself enough time not to be rushed.
- Allow time for your brain to get into action – have a shower. Eat breakfast – at home, at school or eat some fruit as you walk to school.
- Check the exact subject of the exam, how it will be structured (eg short answer section and an essay) and how the marks are awarded.
- Make sure you have everything you need the night before – books you are allowed to take in, equipment including a calculator for science and maths.
- Keep to normal routines – bed and getting up at normal time.
- Leave yourself time to go to the toilet before the exam
- Take water into the exam - your ability to remember and your concentration improves by 70% if you are hydrated.
- Don't worry if you think you have forgotten it all before you go in - if you have revised it will all be there and will come back.

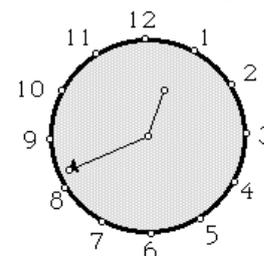
DURING THE EXAM

- 1. Read questions twice.** It can be easy to misunderstand a question so always read the instructions twice and think what the question actually means and what the examiner wants you to write about.
- 2. Questions first.** If your exam paper includes a case study or some other form of stimulus material, it is always worth reading through the questions first. This way, when you come to read the case study, you will know what sort of information (perhaps evidence) you are looking for. Application is a key skill in many examinations and linking the case study to your answers is crucial.
- 3. Highlight and abbreviate.** Most exams will have some sort of stimulus material, such as a case study or extract. Read these carefully and use a highlighter to identify key words or information that you know you should refer to or use in your answers. Reading stimulus material may trigger ideas on what you could write in your answers. Make notes in the margin to remember these ideas, or perhaps even device your own abbreviations to help you make quick notes.
- 4. Plan your answer.** Especially on longer, essay style questions, ensure you give yourself planning time to think how you will structure your answer. Write down a few bullet points, highlight information from the case study (if there is one) and use spare paper or pages in the exam booklet to do a little plan before you start to answer the question. Never put 'pen to paper' straight away. Think about your response and the direction of your answer before you start to write.



"Your brain is like a sponge that absorbs knowledge, but that's not exactly how it's done."

5. **Plan your time.** If your exam has two sections worth equal marks, then it makes sense to be starting section B half way through the exam. Understand the paper you are about to sit, how many marks it is worth and then have a rough plan of where you should be up to at various points in the exam. There may be some guidance on the front of the exam paper, but discuss this with your teachers and get their suggestions before the exam. **Regularly check the clock and pace yourself.**



6. **Check answers.** If you finish the exam early, use the time effectively to flick through your answers and see if there is anything you might have missed. You will be more relaxed at the end of the exam so it will be easier to find any mistakes that you might have made.

7. **Remember your exam technique (how you should answer the questions).** Your teachers will have explained and you will have practised how to write good answers. You will probably know what makes a good answer, and what does not. Don't let this slip away when you get into the exam. It is easy to focus on the questions in front of you and forget exam technique but, stop and ask yourself "How do I answer this type of question?" You might also write down some notes on your paper before you start the exam to help you remember.

8. **Move on and come back later.** If you are stuck on a question, give yourself some thinking time to try and solve it, but not too much. If you are really stuck move on and come back later. It might also be worth writing the question number down at the end of your exam paper so that you don't forget to come back and try again.

9. **Don't panic.** It's natural to feel some exam nerves prior to starting the exam, but getting excessively nervous is counterproductive as you will not be able to think as clearly. The quickest and most effective way to eliminate feelings of stress and panic is to close your eyes and take several long, slow **deep breaths**. Breathing in this way calms your whole nervous system. Simultaneously you could give yourself some mental pep-talk by mentally repeating "I am calm and relaxed" or "I know I will do fine".

HAPPINESS IS



**...your last
exam paper.**