

Examination Preparation and Technique

Preparation Prior to the Day

Examinations (or tests) in any field of endeavour, are a performance and you perform better if you practise the test. Many students seem to forget this aspect of study, they study the topic but they neglect to practise answering questions under test or examination conditions.

In most subjects, there are many practice papers that can be obtained from your teachers or else can be brought on the open market. This web page has some papers which can be down-loaded at no cost whilst others may be bought.

If you want to practise tests in your own home make sure that you initiate real test conditions. ie Select a paper or set of questions that you have not used before, time yourself and answer the paper under proper test conditions.

In essay type subjects, examination practice could have at least two other forms

1. Time yourself in making mind maps on various topics. For example, in modern history, you could make a quick mind map of the first world war. This mind map then could be used to answer a whole range of questions relating to the first world war.
2. Take some of your practice mind maps, devise a question on the topic, and use the mind map to write an essay answer to this question using this mind map. Remember, mind mapping is a very powerful tool in essay writing skills and in devising logic procedures in many aspects of life. Business people use this tool quite often.

Examination practice gives you one other big advantage, if you have practised and perfected a skill then you have confidence in that skill when you have to perform. Going into an examination with confidence will give you your best chance of achieving your highest score.

“Anything in life worth having is worth working for” – and practice makes for far better results

Preparation on the Day

Note : An examination is a performance, it doesn't matter how much you know, if you can't perform on the day you won't pass.

Bearing this in mind, it is better to have a free night prior to any examination so that you are refreshed and relaxed on the day.

On the examination day itself avoid any activity that causes stress, anything that you don't know now doesn't matter.

Also, prepare to arrive at the examination centre roughly on time, if travel can be haphazard to the centre go early to a place near the centre and then walk to the designated place just prior to the examination time. This will allow you to avoid all that unnecessary pre-talk about the examination, such talk only adds to your anxiety and lessens your performance.

At the exam

Have a check-list and make sure that you bring all relevant material that you need to the examination room. Make sure that your calculator has new batteries. Have extra pens, markers etc

Always enter the examination room in a positive frame of mind. Make sure that your physiology **reflects your attitude.**

(Walk into the room as though you are the one.)

Read the examination paper thoroughly and focus on each question. Read the paper through at least three times.

The third reading should be after the examination has started and at which time you should mark the paper with any relevant information that springs to mind. (eg formulae, questions to do first, hints, etc)

Decide on the order of answering the paper, starting with the easiest question first. (do not waste any time on a question that is causing you undue difficulty, leave it and come back to it at the end of the examination if time permits.)

Mark off each question on the examination after it has been done. Use some code to mark questions which have been completely done, which can't be done, and those ones that you have left to return to.

Keep a close watch on your time allocation throughout the examination. A common error for some students is to spend 60% of their time answering about 20% of the paper. At the beginning of the examination you should calculate how much time you have for each question and then decide to stick to that time frame as much as possible.

Use all the time allowed for the examination.

If you are stuck on a question write down something, try and experiment with the given information, draw a good diagram if a diagram is required. Let your pen do your thinking.

Near the end of most examinations you are given a five minutes to finish warning, if you have many unanswered questions try to answer them.

If it is an essay type question, restrict your answer to just point form and list the main points that you would have included in your essay if you had had the time.

If it is a multiple choice type paper, use the last few moments to randomly answer all unanswered questions. Don't use the same option for all answers because some computer marking programs are able to decipher that these are not genuine answers but guesses and do not allocate marks for any of these questions.

Once the examination is finished, completely forget it. Do not involve yourself in any postmortems etc as they are generally non-productive and generate negative thoughts. You have done your best, you cannot change the result, wait for the result and then just get on with the next phase of your life.

Your preparation has made your success and luck, we wish our students every success and the luck of the angels.

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