

- # Check whether the answer you are to choose is the best one or the only true and correct one. Be especially careful with questions that contain negatives. e.g. "Which of these is NOT..." or "All of these except"
- # If you cannot answer a question, leave it and return to it later. BUT: In your final check, make sure that you have answered ALL questions. A blank won't get any marks.

(Exception: where the instructions specify that marks will be deducted for wrong answers).

* Problems

- # Make sure you write down any formulae that you need and which are not provided in the exam paper as soon as you can.
- # If you cannot quickly see how to do a problem, leave it and return to it later.
- # Write something in answer to every problem. By stating part of the correct formula or answer your may get one or two marks, and every mark is worth having.
- # Label all working stages clearly so that these can be followed clearly by the marker.
- * Near the end of the exam
- # Make sure you have attempted all the questions you have been asked to. Remember, it is easier to get the first 5 marks for an essay or problem than it is to get the last few marks. So every question you attempt normally adds some marks to your total.
- # Check all your answers. Look for words that are illeble, unclear, or misspelt. If you are having difficulty reading or understanding your answer, the marker will find it even harder!
- # Make sure all questions are correctly numbered.
- # Never leave the exam room before time is up. Continual checking and refining can only help.

GOOD LUCK!

- * Number your answers correctly.
- * Answer an 'easy' question first.
- # with a good start, you will think more effectively for all questions and become calmer and more positive.
- * Answer each new question on a new page unless instructed otherwise.
- * Note carefully the meaning of terms asked in each question:
- # Check back to Chapter 13 for a list of terms and their definitions.
- * Essay questions:
- # Check the wording and underline key words.
- # On spare paper jot down your ideas on the main points, ideas and facts to include in the essay. This is BRAINSTORMING.
- # Sort out your brainstorming ideas into a logical form or order.
- # Do not start your essay until you know how you are going to begin and end your answer.
- # Write or print legibly. This will make your answer easier to read, and will be appreciated by the examiner, particularly if he or she is marking at 1.00 a.m.
- # Keep to the word limits of the answer. If a question asks for 200 words, 50 will be too few, 300 too many.
- # Write a short but arresting introduction.
- # Develop your answer in the body of the essay - be logical, write in paragraphs, take care over spelling and terminology.
- # End with a persuasive summary or conclusion. Sometimes you can include wording from the essay question to emphasize that you have answered the question as asked.

* Short answer and Multi choice questions

- # make sure you know the **method** needed to answer the questions. e.g. ticking or crossing in boxes, blacking out a space, or writing a letter (A B C D E).
- # Care must be taken in completing these questions. If your mark extends into 2 boxes, if the letter you write is unclear, or if the space you blacken is not completely covered, you may not get the credit for your answer.
- # Work through questions fairly rapidly but carefully. If the correct answer looks obvious, still check the other alternatives. There may be a better answer further on. Delete obvious non-answers first, then make a choice. Have confidence in your ability to answer correctly. If you decide that the answer you have written is wrong, then change it, but only after careful checking.

14.2. EXAMINATION TECHNIQUE

1. To re-emphasize: Know the **date** and **time** of each exam.

Every year some students turn up on the wrong day, or at the wrong time for an exam. Their whole year's work is jeopardised. It is useful to colour code your exam times on your revision planner - one colour for morning exams; a second colour for afternoon exams.

2. Before the exam:

* Make sure you have a good night's sleep. You cannot give a true account of what you have learned if you are tired. Remember that sitting and writing for 2 - 3 hours is quite tiring enough, so make sure you are physically fresh. Keep off artificial stimulants.

* Avoid cramming on the last evening or even just prior to an exam. This is a poor substitute for regular learning, and can lead to confusion. BUT checking over key points and main ideas is sensible revision.

* Enjoy a good breakfast - you will need all the energy this will provide.

* Remember to take all the materials you need into the exam room. This includes spare pens, pencils, rubber, calculator etc.

* Arrive in good time - well before the scheduled starting time.

* Have an accurate watch with you to keep track of time.

* Relax - While a little anxiety before an exam is a good sign (it shows you are concerned about the exam and not over-confident), you should try to relax as much as possible. As one writer says, "It's OK to have butterflies in your stomach as long as they fly in formation".

* Keep away from nervous and jittery friends before an exam. They may confuse you and destroy your confidence. It is better to spend time in peace and quiet, and to stay calm and positive.

3. In the exam room

* Aim for mental calm - get comfortably settled. If you are nervous, take slow deep breaths. If you become tired during the exam try these techniques:

- # close your eyes and take deep breaths; slowly and quietly say 'relax' to yourself.
- # Let your arms and hands dangle.
- # Flex and relax finger muscles.
- # Change your body position at your desk without disrupting other candidates. This will let blood flow to your thighs, buttocks and back.
- # Stretch your arms, legs, back and neck.
- # Breathe deeply again.

* If you suffer from writers' cramp during an exam, let your arm dangle by your side, flex your hand muscles. Vary your pace by attempting a different style of question - e.g. Multi choice - to give your writing muscles a rest.

* If you are faced with a Mental Block, don't panic. Take a deep breath and relax. Think back to class time and your notes and try to remember some point. Did you make a mindmap of this topic, or draw a diagram, or see a video?

If the blank persists, leave the question, and come back to it later. Your mind will continue to work on this problem while you concentrate on something else.

* Read the exam carefully - Make sure you note all of the following:

The number of questions in the exam paper and whether they are arranged in sections.

How many questions in total you must answer, and how many you must answer from each section.

Whether there are any compulsory questions.

Whether each question is to be answered on a new page.

Whether there is a specified order of answering questions.

How many marks each question is worth.

How your answers are to be recorded. This is especially important if computer-scored answer sheets are used.

How the answer booklets are to be headed.

Where you code number (if applicable) is to be written.

Any other directives from the examiner.

* Plan your time carefully and accurately - according to the marks for each question.

e.g. If you have three hours (180 minutes) for a 100 mark paper, this equates to roughly 18 minutes for a 10 mark question. If you allocate 16 minutes for each 10 mark question (32 minutes for 20 marks) this will leave 20 minutes for familiarising yourself with the paper at the start, and at the end will enable you to re-read your answers, add to them if necessary, and generally check what you have written.

Keep to your time limit per question. Some give and take might be possible if you finish one question early and go slightly over time in another.

Remember that it is always easier to achieve the first marks for a question than the last. So, it is important that each question you need to answer is attempted. The simple fact is that no marks can be awarded for an empty space.

If you leave a question or wish to return to it, make a note on your paper - some symbol to remind you - so you won't forget in the latter stages of the exam.