

So you've got exams coming up?

Many students in the senior years have a block of exams looming after the next school holidays. What should you be doing now (and in the holidays) to be prepared for your examinations?

Between now and the end of term you need to focus on the following:

1. **CLASSTIME:** Use every moment of every lesson to the full. Every moment you waste in class is time you will have to make up later. (Plus it is not fair to others in the class.)
2. **STUDY NOTES:** Work on (and finish) study notes. The more you can complete before the end of term the better, it will give you more time to learn the notes and do lots of practice for the exams.
3. **ASK FOR HELP:** Ask your teachers about difficult areas (reviewing the things you find hardest) and starting topic by topic revision. Do this now while you have good access to your teachers and can ask lots of questions.
4. **MAJOR WORKS:** Work on major works or projects or large assessments.
5. **PLAN FOR HOLIDAYS:** Put together a plan for the holidays. Get hold of past examination papers, study guides, essay questions, revision sheets. Ensure you have everything you need before the holidays start and you are clear on what you will be doing for your study.

The best way to make this happen is every Sunday night make a plan in your diary for what work you want to get done that week. If you make a plan it is much more likely to happen.

What do you do in the holidays to prepare for the exams?

1. **TIME:** How much time do you spend studying for the exams in the holidays? It will depend on many factors: how much work you did during the term, how confident you are with the work, how soon your exams are after the holidays, and what sort of marks you are aiming for. Most students in Year 12 would try and do a normal school day if it is a major block of exams, around 6 hours of study a day.
2. **STRUCTURE:** How should you structure your study during the holidays? Don't start too late in the day; try and keep your sleep patterns fairly similar to how they will be in the exam time. The best way to structure your day is first do an hour reviewing your study from the previous day. That will help to cement the information in your memory. Then have a break. Then do 2-3 hours on one subject. Have a break. Then 2-3 hours on another subject. Then you can have the rest of the night off! It is better for retention of information to spread your study for each subject out rather than just spend a whole day on one subject.

3. WHAT SORT OF STUDY SHOULD YOU BE DOING?

STEP 1 - ASAP Create some STUDY NOTES for each subject:

The first stage is making your own study notes. This forces you to work through all the topics, find the areas you don't understand and spend time working through them. You organise the information in ways to make it easier to learn it and you reduce what you need to go through to study. Purchased study guides are great to help you structure your own study notes, but don't let them replace the process of making your own notes – it is in the creation of your study notes that massive learning leaps take place. If you have left it a bit late, consider going to a bookshop this week for a Study Guide to form the basis of your study notes. Use the information your teacher has given you about each specific exam and its content to help you keep adding to and improving your study notes.

STEP 2 – ACTIVELY REVIEW the things you need to learn:

Once you have some decent notes time to move into the next phase: LEARNING AND PRACTICE!!!! You have to learn, understand and sometimes memorise the content, then you have to practise applying what you have learnt by practising the skills of the subject. Keep alternating between learning and practising. At first you may spend more time learning than practising, but as you start to move into your long-term memory you'll spend less time reviewing your notes and more time practising under exam conditions (especially doing past papers for 3 hours).

STEP 3 - Do as many PAST EXAMINATION PAPERS as possible:

- Do all papers UNDER EXAM CONDITIONS (time limits and without looking at notes).
- Mark/correct your work at the end or ask your teacher to check it.
- Ask for help on things you could not work out or don't understand.
- Add notes to your summaries about things you need to remember.
- After completing a past exam paper, do targeted revision to review areas you did not know.
- Improve your examination techniques.

Final thoughts:

LEARN FROM YOUR MISTAKES AND FIX THEM

GET YOUR NOTES AND STUDY MATERIAL ORGANISED AND COMPLETE

START STUDYING ASAP AS YOU CAN SEE HOW QUICKLY TIME GETS AWAY

MAKE YOUR STUDY ACTIVE! DON'T JUST SIT THERE READING

GET UP-TO-DATE IN YOUR WORK AND NOTES AND STAY THERE

USE EVERY AVAILABLE BIT OF TIME – LIKE STUDY PERIODS!

CONCENTRATE ON PAST PAPERS UNDER EXAMINATION CONDITIONS

MAKE A FIRM DECISION AS TO HOW MUCH TIME YOU WILL ALLOCATE TO STUDY & STICK TO IT