

Suggestions for Helping you Through Exams

Study Habits

Study Area - Having a good study area can make a huge difference to how well you learn. Study in a well lit, quiet area, away from noises and people in the house. If this is impossible, it might be better to study at the library. Make sure your desk is tidy and organised - it means you can concentrate on studying and learning, not trying to find information.

Find Out About the Exam - Find out what format the exam will take i.e. Are the questions in essay, short answer or multiple choice format? Is the exam open book or closed book? Knowing how the exam is marked and what proportion of your total mark it's worth might also be helpful.

To Do Lists - Make a to do list before each study session. Breaking tasks down into small, manageable tasks will make it less overwhelming. Cross them off with a texta as you go.

Past Exam Papers - Ask your teacher for past exam papers. They can be a useful insight into what your exam will be like and can also provide a guide for what you know and the areas in which you need help. If possible, practice some under exam conditions and get your teacher to mark them.

Switch the Phone or Email Off! - If you find that you are being distracted by the phone or emails, it might help to put the answering machine on or get others in the house to take messages for a while. You can always ring people back later.

Wallpaper - Write down key concepts you have to learn on small sheets of paper followed by examples of how they are used. Post these sheets around your house, e.g. your bed, on the toilet door, in front of the CD collection. It helps with remembering things like equations, quotes and foreign languages.

Ask Lots of Questions of your Teachers or Tutor! Your teacher or tutor can help if you are having trouble developing a study routine or need help with understanding subjects or a particular topic. Asking for help doesn't mean you're a failure or stupid - it's smart to tap into their experience and knowledge to help you perform better. Keep going back to them if you're still unsure or you have more questions. It's their job to be available for you.

Know your Preferred Learning Style - Some people work better using text based memory tools, like acronyms (e.g. ROYGBIV - colours of the rainbow; acrostics e.g. Every Good Boy Deserves Fruit). Other people find more visual tools more useful, e.g. mind maps or tree diagrams.

Take Regular Breaks - Getting up, moving around and away from your desk at least every 50 minutes for 10 minutes makes you concentrate and learn better.

Revise and Learn (Not Just Re-Read) - Sometimes reading through notes doesn't result in learning or understanding. Include the following in revising each topic:

- Vocabulary, technical terms definitions
- Summaries of points
- Formulae, rules, diagrams, charts
- Ability to understand relationships

Time Management

Avoid Procrastination - Procrastination is when you do everything else but the task you need to do. It is normal to procrastinate a little. However too much procrastination can just add to your stress and can result in you not giving yourself enough time to prepare. Managing your time and setting realistic goals for each study session can be helpful ways to avoid procrastinating and make tasks seem less overwhelming.

Make a Study Timetable - Write down all the things you need to do each day of the week, and how long you need for each, including time for enough sleep, relaxation, and exercise. Find out the date of each exam and work out a study timetable leading up to them. Include tests that will help you identify gaps in your knowledge. This can give you some direction and help you focus on what to study each week or day.