Examinations

Preparing for exams
The following steps are all important in your preparation for exams. See our separate Top Tips sheet on Revision to find out how to make your revision more active.

- Find out about the format of the exam
- Plan your revision
- Organise your notes
- Make your revision active
- Understand don’t just memorise
- Practice exam technique

Exam day routine
• Get up in plenty of time to avoid any last minute rush and eat breakfast to keep you going, if you can face it!
• Double check where you are going and when you need to be there.
• Check your supplies: Student card, several working pens, calculator (if allowed), battery…
• Some people like to go for a walk or run to get energised, others like to chill.
• Leave plenty of time to get to the exam room – buses break down, bicycle chains come off…

In the exam hall
• Check instructions carefully. There may be slight changes since the last exam.
• Be certain about the number of questions you have to answer.
• Check the reverse of pages to make sure they don’t contain more questions or instructions!
• Tick the questions you intend to do. Decide when you should end each question and note the time beside it.
• It may help to start with the easiest question first to bolster your confidence.
• Underline key words in an essay type question.
• For a one-hour answer, spend about 10 minutes planning, jotting down any ideas that spring to mind, then organising them. This really is worth it.
• End with the question you know least about.
• Keep an eye on your time!!! Make sure you write something on each question. If you do run out of time, write in note form. 80% of exam marks are awarded to the first 50% of most answers – so it is more important to start answers than to finish them.
• Remember it’s easier to gain some quick marks from a new answer - even a brief one or notes - than it is to pick up extra marks from an already reasonable answer.
• Allow a few minutes at the end to check what you’ve written, cross out rough notes with a straight line and rewrite any illegible words. (Examiners can’t give you marks if they can’t read what you’ve written and most do want you to succeed!)