

St Peter's College Exam Tips

EVERYONE feels **NERVOUS ABOUT TAKING EXAMS**. Here are **SOME TIPS** to help you make the **MOST OF YOUR REVISION TIME** and keep those nerves under control.

It's **IMPORTANT** to remember that an examination is a test of **LEARNING**, not memory. Examiners want to see evidence that you have **DRAWN ON YOUR KNOWLEDGE** to develop a **REASONED ARGUMENT**, rather than replicate course notes and textbook facts. **REVISION SHOULD BE A PROCESS OF CONSOLIDATING UNDERSTANDING**, rather than cramming as much information as possible before the morning of the exam.

STUDY SKILLS

WHERE TO STUDY

Creating good conditions to study in can help you make the most of the time you spend revising. Here are some suggestions:

- Find a **QUIET PLACE** to study and make sure you are **SITTING COMFORTABLY**
- Make sure your desk is **WELL LIT**
- Keep background **NOISE TO A MINIMUM**
- **AVOID** studying in an area where there will be **DISTRACTIONS** (like television!)
- Have everything you need to do your revision to hand before you start

HOW TO STUDY

There is **NO 'RIGHT WAY'** to revise, as long as the **METHOD** you choose **ENABLES YOU TO GAIN A SOLID GRASP** of key facts and **CONSOLIDATE YOUR KNOWLEDGE**. Some students are happy to read their classroom notes from start to finish, others prefer to simplify the information as much as possible, turning everything into skeleton notes, diagrams or mnemonics. In practice, most students find that **MIXING TECHNIQUES** suits the varied nature of the subjects being revised, and **PROVIDES ESSENTIAL VARIETY** when studying.

- **TURN YOUR NOTES INTO REVISION TOOLS;**
 - **WRITE** Ideas and facts on to **CARDS** to use as '**PROMPTS**'
 - **CREATE MEMORY AIDS** such as diagrams or **MNEMONICS** (e.g. initial letters to make a word you need to remember or **SMART** objectives: Specific; Measurable; Achievable; Realistic; Targets). These will help you remember key facts
 - **WRITE** key facts/notes out and **DISPLAY THESE AROUND THE HOUSE** where you will see them
 - record yourself reading notes to listen to
- **STUDY WITH A FRIEND** and test each other's knowledge, but remember you are meeting to revise rather than to chat!
- **WORK THROUGH PAST QUESTION PAPERS**—and use a watch to time them so that you can practise timing your answers.
- **CHOOSE STUDY AND REVISION GUIDES SENSIBLY**. It's not hard to find help with revision – as well as established published revision guides, there are hundreds of websites offering help and advice. The problem is not how to find such help, but how to **JUDGE WHICH IS THE BEST SOURCE FOR YOUR NEEDS**. Save valuable time and **GET RECOMMENDATIONS FROM YOUR TEACHERS**
- Remember **COURSE NOTES** are also a valuable source of extra help
- **KEEP** yourself more **ALERT** by changing revision methods during a session. For instance, try **SWITCHING** from **NOTE TAKING** to **MEMORISING**; from **READING** to asking **SOMEONE TO TEST YOU**
- **ATTEND ANY REVISION CLASSES** that your teachers may be running and get their advice on revision methods
- **LOOK AFTER YOURSELF** – Sometimes revision can become a competition – who stayed up latest, who worked longest, who's worrying the most. But **THE MORE TIRED YOU ARE THE LESS EFFICIENTLY YOU'LL WORK**. You need to **REST** as well as **STUDY**, **EAT** well, **DRINK LOTS OF WATER** and make sure you **PACE YOURSELF**. Don't rush, and equally don't over-revise by doing too much too soon

St Peter's College Exam Tips

REVISION PLAN

The **TOP TIP FOR SUCCESSFUL REVISION IS TO MAKE A PLAN**; otherwise it is easy to waste your precious revision time. We recommend that you start your revision at least **SIX WEEKS BEFORE YOUR EXAMS BEGIN**. It is helpful to look at your exam dates and work backwards to the first date you intend to start revising.

- **LIST** all your **EXAM SUBJECTS** and the amount of time you think you will need for each one. It is unlikely that the amounts will be equal. Many people find it advisable to **ALLOCATE MORE TIME** to the **SUBJECT** or topics they find the **MOST DIFFICULT**
- **DRAW UP A REVISION PLAN** for each week
- Fill in any regular commitments you have first and the dates of your examinations
- Use **REVISION CHECKLISTS** or **SYLLABUSES** for each subject as a starting point. Look at **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW** and try to **IDENTIFY** any **GAPS** in your knowledge. (A good way of doing this is to look at the results of past papers or tests you have worked through)
- **DIVIDE YOUR TIME** for each subject into **TOPICS** based on the units in the **REVISION CHECKLIST** or syllabus, and make sure you allow enough time for each one
- **PLAN YOUR TIME CAREFULLY**, assigning more time to subjects and topics you find difficult
- Revise **OFTEN**; try and do a **LITTLE EVERY DAY**
- **PLAN IN TIME OFF**, including time for activities which can be done out in the **FRESH AIR**. Take a 5 or 10 minute **BREAK EVERY HOUR** and do some **STRETCHING EXERCISES**, go for a **SHORT WALK** or make a drink
- You may find it helpful to **CHANGE FROM ONE SUBJECT TO ANOTHER AT 'BREAK' TIME**, for example doing one or two sessions of maths and then changing to Geography, or alternating a favourite subject with a more difficult one. It helps to build in some variety
- **WRITE UP YOUR PLAN AND DISPLAY IT SOMEWHERE VISIBLE**
- **ADJUST YOUR TIMETABLE** if necessary and try to focus on your weakest topics and subjects
- **DON'T PANIC**; think about what you can achieve, not what you can't. **POSITIVE THINKING IS IMPORTANT!**

LAST-MINUTE REVISION TIPS

Although time may be short, **YOU CAN STILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO YOUR GRADE**. Try and **PRIORITISE**; do what you can.

- **USE YOUR REVISION TOOLS** (prompts, diagrams etc) to check final facts
- **KEEP CALM AND CONSOLIDATE** your **EXISTING KNOWLEDGE** rather than trying to learn new topics
- **DON'T STAY UP ALL NIGHT REVISING**; being overtired will not help you to do your best

DEALING WITH EXAM NERVES

It is **NATURAL** to feel **NERVOUS** before an examination. **THE MORE PREPARED YOU FEEL**, the **EASIER** it will be to conquer your fears.

- **CREATE A REVISION PLAN** to help you feel in **CONTROL OF THE PROCESS**
- **PLAN YOUR WORK CAREFULLY** around the topics you need to focus on. Being aware of gaps in your knowledge can create nerves, but **HAVING A PLAN** of how you will fill these will make you feel better.
- **FIND OUT WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE EXAM:**
 - **WHERE** and **WHEN** it will take place
 - how much **TIME** is allowed
 - how **MANY QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO ANSWER**
- **THINK POSITIVE**
- **KEEP THE EXAM IN CONTEXT** – even if you do badly, there will be other options open to you
- **ALLOW** yourself some **FUN-TIME** each day to **RELAX**
- **EAT SENSIBLY** – your brain cells need energy to function well. Make sure you **DRINK PLENTY OF WATER** to avoid becoming dehydrated. **DEHYDRATION MAKES YOU TIRED AND REDUCES CONCENTRATION**

St Peter's College Exam Tips

EXAM TIPS – SITTING THE EXAM

BE PREPARED; find out **WHAT IS INVOLVED** in each of the **EXAMINATIONS** that you are going to sit. **ORGANISE YOURSELF** the night before and **GET PLENTY OF SLEEP**.

- Check you have the **CORRECT EQUIPMENT** with you **BEFORE** you leave the house (pens pencils, ruler, scientific calculator, etc)
- Do take a **WATCH** or **CLOCK** so that you can **TIME YOUR ANSWERS**
- **LEAVE FOR THE EXAM IN PLENTY OF TIME**
- **LOOK THROUGH THE PAPER FIRST** and **MARK** difficult questions/initial thoughts
- Select the questions that will **BEST ENABLE YOU TO DEMONSTRATE YOUR KNOWLEDGE** to the examiner
- **LOOK AT THE MARKS AVAILABLE** and read the questions carefully, **FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN IN THE PAPER** (e.g. to show all workings, word limits etc)
- **USE THE INFORMATION** provided on the paper (the answer's often nearly all there)
- **PACE YOURSELF** and **ALLOW ENOUGH TIME** to answer all the required questions
- **WRITE** as **NEATLY** as possible to **HELP THE EXAMINER** to mark your work. **MARKING UNTIDY WRITING IS DIFFICULT**
- For **LONGER ANSWERS**, **TAKE A FEW MINUTES** before you begin to **PRODUCE A STRUCTURED PLAN** of what you are going to include in each section
- Allow yourself **TEN MINUTES** at the end to **READ THROUGH YOUR ANSWERS** and **CORRECT ANY MISTAKES**
- **CROSS OUT ANYTHING** you do **NOT WANT THE EXAMINER TO READ** (e.g. an earlier answer to a question)

EXAM TIPS – AFTER THE EXAM

It is easy to fall in to the **TRAP** of **WONDERING** how **WELL YOU PERFORMED** and to discuss this with your fellow students. **YOUR TIME WOULD BE BETTER SPENT LOOKING AHEAD TO YOUR NEXT EXAMINATION.**

- **DON'T PANIC** – you **WON'T** be the **ONLY STUDENT** who is **ANXIOUS** about their answers
- **DON'T COMPARE YOUR ANSWERS** with those of other students – **THIS CAN CREATE NEGATIVE FEELINGS**
- Have some **FRESH AIR** and **FOOD** and take time to **RELAX BEFORE YOU START REVISING**
- **DON'T RUSH TO YOUR TEXTBOOKS TO CHECK YOUR ANSWERS** – there is **NO POINT** at this stage
- **FOCUS ON THE NEXT EXAM** and how you **MIGHT IMPROVE** your **EXAM TECHNIQUE**
- Have a quick look at your **REVISION PLAN**. Do you need to **ADJUST IT**?

Think positive!