

Exam Top Tips



A helpful guide to achieving
success in your GCSE's



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English Language

Reading

- You will have one hour to complete this section on both papers, so there is no time to waste. Write the number of the question in the margin.
- In paper 2 questions 5 & 6 will ask you to refer to both texts in your answer. Make sure you are clear about which writer or text you are discussing.**
- Make sure you've read the information in bold (above the question) so that you know which text to use to answer the question.
- Read the question, underline the key words and then skim the text to find the information you need to answer the question. When you find the answer record it-read and record.**
- Your answers should track the text.
- Use the evidence-comment to structure your answer.**
- Ensure your selected quotations are no longer than 6 words.
- Use connectives such as: 'firstly', 'secondly' to show the examiner where your new point starts. Remember the 20:20:20 rule for Component 2.**

Component 1: Creative writing:

- ✓ **You have 45 minutes to complete this task.**
- ✓ Select one title and make sure you plan.
- ✓ **Remember the 5 part plan: Opening, Development, Problem, Reaction, Reflection.**
- ✓ You should have 5 clear parts to your story.
- ✓ **Remember the 'Arms Length Test' -your story needs to be at least three pages long and have clear paragraphs.**
- ✓ Your story needs to be believable-limit your characters and try and write about something you know a lot about.

Component 2:

- ✓ **You have 1 hour to complete two compulsory tasks.**
- ✓ Read the questions and highlight key words/phrases that explain purpose, audience and format.
- ✓ **Plan your answer-think of the main ideas for each paragraph.**
- ✓ You should have 6 paragraphs-introduction, 4 key ideas and a conclusion.
- ✓ **Use the 'Building a Paragraph' strategy delivered to you in class, this will ensure you achieve detail.**
- ✓ The 'Arms Length Test' applies here too-2 ½ pages should be enough for each task (4 pages in total).
- ✓ **Make sure you make the format obvious e.g. letters need addresses!**
- ✓ Ensure you use the right formality for your audience.
- ✓ **Check your spellings, punctuation and sentences carefully. Use a range of punctuation. ,()!?:;**

English Literature

Exam Tips



- ✓ **There are 2 examination papers - Paper 1 and Paper 2.**
- ✓ Paper 1 is 2 hours and covers 'Macbeth' and 'Poetry'.
- ✓ **Paper 2 is 2 hours 30 minutes and covers 'Blood Brothers', 'A Christmas Carol' and 'Unseen Poetry'.**
- ✓ Two questions for the set texts 'Macbeth' and 'Jekyll & Hyde'. You have an extract question and an essay question which should cover the whole play.
- ✓ **One unseen poetry question – 45 minutes.**
- ✓ One poetry anthology question – 35 minutes.
- ✓ **Make sure you read the suggested time for each question.**

Paper 1:

For 'Macbeth' you will have to answer solely on an extract in Section A and then complete an essay response on the rest of the play in Section B.

You are advised to spend 20 minutes on Section A and 40 minutes on Section B.

In terms of the 'Poetry Anthology', you will have to answer on the named poem in Section A and then compare it to a poem of your choice in Section B.

You are advised to spend 20 minutes on Section A and 40 minutes on Section B.



Paper 2:

For both 'Blood Brothers' and 'A Christmas Carol' you will be given an extract-essay response. Here you will discuss the extract and the wider text in the same response.

You are advised to spend 45 minutes on each of these.

For the 'Unseen Poetry' question, in Section A you will answer solely on one poem and then compare it to another in Section B.

You are advised to spend 20 minutes on Section A and 40 minutes on Section B.



Creative iMedia

Creative iMedia is assessed by 3 controlled assessments and a 75 minute written paper (60 marks) which is 25% of the final grade.

- Make sure you read the whole assessment paper first! This will give you an idea of what you are going to produce and will help you remember key aspects of the brief.

You will complete 3 controlled assessments in lessons as follows:

R082: Creating digital graphics – 60 marks (60 UMS)

This will test your knowledge understanding and skills including: purpose of images, image properties suited to its purpose, knowledge of photo editing skills and image design

R085: Creating a multipage website 60 marks (60 UMS)

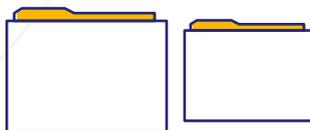
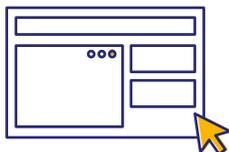
This will test your knowledge, understanding and skills of the purpose and features of websites. You will need to show your ability to use a range of design skills to design a website prior to creating it. You will need to evaluate your website based on the criteria it's performance

R087: Creating interactive multimedia products 60 marks (60 UMS)

This will test your knowledge, understanding and skills of the purpose and features of interactive products. You will use a range of design tools/skills to plan an interactive product of your own. Use appropriate software to create your product and export in a suitable format. You will need to evaluate and review your product against the specification

Remember:

- ✓ Read and highlight key words in both the exam and the controlled assessment.
- ✓ Read the tasks and then the assessment criteria to help you to understand what the task requirement is, then decide on the best method to use to demonstrate this.
- ✓ If you're not sure what you are being asked in the controlled assessment- ask!
- ✓ Make sure you understand the key words in the assessment criteria: (Limited, Sound or thorough understanding)
 - Few = 2 or more
 - Range = 3 to 4
 - Wide range = more than 5
- ✓ Buy a revision guide, they are available from the ParentPay shop on the academy website



OCR Engineering

OCR National in Engineering Design – 1 hour written paper (60 marks) which is set and marked by the examination board.

Unit R105: Design briefs, design specifications and user requirements.

This unit provides the opportunity for learners to show their understanding of the requirements of design briefs and design specifications for the development of new products.

Learning Outcome 1: **Understand the design cycle and the relationship between design briefs and design specifications** – identification of needs.

Learning Outcome 2: **Understand the requirements of design specifications for the development of a new product** – the needs of the user, the product, the manufacturer, regulations and safeguards.

Learning Outcome 3: **Know about the wider influences on the design of new products** – eg. Advancements in technology, Culture / fashion, sustainability and environmental pressures.



- Look at the marks for each question, you should spend 1 minute per mark during the exam.** Some questions will require simple one word answers.
- Towards the end of your paper there are questions that require you to show knowledge AND understanding** and will require a more extended response.
- You will demonstrate your understanding** through questions that require the skills of analysis and evaluation in particular contexts.
- These types of questions are often criteria marked.** These usually start with the words discuss, describe, evaluate, assess or explain.
- You must expand on your answers to gain full marks** - This might be through explaining HOW, WHAT, WHY, and then give specific examples.
- Read the question, underline the key words** (make sure you have understood the question FULLY before starting to write).
- Don't leave any gaps**, if you are unsure, leave it until the end, go back to it and if you still don't know TRY!
- You may still get a few marks** - even from writing a keyword on the topic?

Excelling in

OCR Health and Social Care

OCR Cambridge National Level 1/2 Health and Social Care
1 hour written paper (60 marks) which is set and marked by the
examination board.

Unit R021

Essential values of care for use with individuals in care settings.

This unit focuses on the rights of individuals and will instil the values of care to be used when working in a health and social care or early years environment. This unit also provides an overview of legislation and its impact on the care settings and covers the hygiene, safety and security matters that relate to promoting a healthy and safe environment.

Learning outcome 1:

Understand how to support individuals to maintain their rights.

Learning outcome 2:

Understand the importance of the values of care and how they are applied.

Learning outcome 3:

Understand how legislation impacts on care settings.

Learning outcome 4:

Understand how personal hygiene, safety and security measures protect individuals.

al Care

- ✓ **Look at the marks for each question, you should spend 1 minute per mark during the exam.** Some questions will require simple one word answers.
- ✓ **Towards the end of your paper there are questions that require you to show knowledge AND understanding** and will require a more extended response.
- ✓ **You will demonstrate your understanding** through questions that require the skills of analysis and evaluation in particular contexts.
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- ✓ **Read the question, underline the key words** (make sure you have understood the question FULLY before starting to write).
- ✓ **Don't leave any gaps,** if you are unsure, leave it until the end, go back to it and if you still don't know TRY!
- ✓ **You may still get a few marks -** even from writing a keyword on the topic?

Success in

Geography Exams

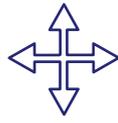
You will have 1 hour 30 mins for paper 1
(Hazards, the living world and physical landscapes)

You will have 1 hour 30 mins for paper 2
(Urban challenges, economic world, resource management)

You will have 1 hour 15 mins for paper 3
(fieldwork and pre-release)



- Attempt every question.
- Read the question carefully, underline the key command words and circle any other relevant information.
- Check how many marks are available for the question and use this as a guide to the number of points needed.
- Use the command words e.g. Explain.... (4 marks) means give 2 developed points with connectives. Name/ state.... (4) means 4 different points.
- Refer back to the question once you have started to answer it to make sure you don't go off topic.



- Make sure you are using the resource booklet properly. If it is in the resource booklet, you should be referring to it or using it in your answers.
- When reading maps check the title and the key to make sure you understand it fully.
- When reading graphs think about the overall trend, specific figures and any 'mini-trends' (changes within the graph).
- Ensure the correct spelling of key words.
- Remember capital letters for place names.
- Write in full sentences and use paragraphs for your longer answers.
- Learn your case studies! You need to include specific details.
- Re read and check your answers if there is time at the end of the exam.

Hospitality and Cateri

Exam Tips



- You will have 1 hour and 30 minutes to complete this paper, so there is no time to waste.
- Look at the marks for each question, some may require just words or ticks, others may need Point, Example, Explanation.
- Towards the end of your paper there are questions that require you to show knowledge AND understanding.
- These types of questions are often criteria marked. These usually start with the words discuss, describe, evaluate, assess or explain.
- You must expand on your answers to gain full marks - This might be through explaining HOW, WHAT, WHY, give specific examples.



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Remember P.E.E:

- Point:** Make a point
- Evidence:** Back up the point you made
- Explain:** Give a detailed explanation

Top Tips

- Read the question**, underline the key words (make sure you have understood the question FULLY before starting to write).
- If it states 'to the customer'** - talk about the customer.
- If it states 'to the establishment/industry'** - talk ONLY about the establishment/industry.
- Don't leave any gaps**, if you are unsure, leave it until the end, go back to it and if you still don't know TRY! You may still get a few marks - even from writing a keyword on the topic?

This unit is assessed using an on screen test. This is set and marked by the exam board.

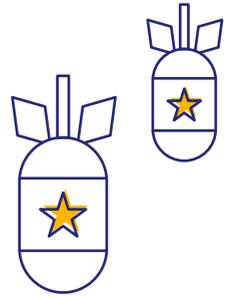
Top tips in

History Exams

Exam Tips



- ✓ **Follow the money** – the big marks are at the back of the paper and without answering these you cannot get a Grade 5 or above so you **MUST** answer them. Start with these or be brutally strict with your timings for the other questions so you can get to them.
- ✓ **The clock is a tool for you to use** – so look at it. Don't spend too long on questions you are comfortable on. The extra time never pays you back as much as attempting all the questions.
- ✓ **Underline the focus of the question**, e.g. the topic you are being asked about – How useful is this source for the historian researching Indian attitudes to the buffalo.
- ✓ **Explain questions** for the American West and Medicine papers.



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PEE – if you're making a point then support with an example and say 'this meant that...' to explain it.

GRIPES

Is for Geography. Is there an aspect of this question which could be focused on people's beliefs e.g. opposition to anaesthetics in child birth was based on religious arguments, Eve's punishment was to give birth in pain, so women shouldn't have access to anaesthetics.

Is for Religion. Is there an aspect of this question which could be focussed on people's beliefs e.g. opposition to anaesthetics in childbirth was based on religious arguments Eve's punishment was to give birth in pain so women shouldn't have access to anaesthetics.

Is for Individuals. Are there any famous people who I could mention e.g. Jim Bridger the mountain man who opened up new routes to the West.

Is for Politics. Were any new laws introduced by governments to win votes e.g. Free land for railway companies.

Is for Economics. Did money play a part in the reason for something e.g. doctors not wanting to lose money from inoculations when vaccination became available.

Is for Social. Were any groups of people to blame e.g. ethnic conflicts in the American West.

Excelling in

GCSE Religious Studies

Summary of Assessment

Component 1: Religious, Philosophical and Ethical Studies in the Modern World.

Written examination = 2 hours. 50% of qualification. Candidates will study the following four themes. All questions are compulsory.

Theme 1: Issues of Relationships

Theme 2: Issues of Life and Death

Theme 3: Issues of Good and Evil

Theme 4: Issues of Human Rights

This component will be assessed by compulsory questions focusing on knowledge, understanding and evaluation of the identified themes.

Component 2: Study of Christianity

Written examination = 1 hour. 25% of qualification. Candidates will study the beliefs, teachings and practices of Christianity.

This component will be assessed by compulsory questions focussing on knowledge, understanding and evaluation of the subject content.

Component 3: Study of a World Faith

Written examination = 1 hour. 25% of qualification. Candidates will study the beliefs, teachings and practices of Islam

This component will be assessed by compulsory questions focusing on knowledge, understanding and evaluation of the subject content.

Remember:



- Knowledge and understanding**
Impact/how does it influence what they do
(only if necessary)
Source of wisdom (evidence or story)
Specialist terms
Judgement (this is a strong/weak point)
Overall (create a conclusion)



- 2 marker:** define and example
5 marker: 5 developed points and source of wisdom if necessary
8 marker: This always needs a 'because' in it Eg
Christians believe euthanasia is wrong because..' 2/3
paragraphs ideally.
15 marker: KISS JO- make sure you use connectives and
analysis in your arguments. On the life and death issues
you must talk about humanist.

Maths Exams

Exam Tips



- Why not check the number of marks? Remember 2 or more means method marks!
- Why not draw yourself a number-line to help? Especially with negatives!
- Why not write down important formulas as you start your exam (Area = $\pi \times r^2$; Circumference = $\pi \times$ diameter; Speed = Distance \div Time ...)? You can forget about them until needed that way!

R.U.C.S.A.C.

Read every question slowly and carefully.

Understand the question before answering.

Choose the important info (underline or highlight).

Solve your problem (showing step-by-step working).

AnsWER the question (re-read it if needed).

Check. Check. Check!

The Art of Checking



Have you answered every question?



Have you shown all of your working?



Have you stated your units?
(for length, area, volume, speed, ...)



Have you communicated your answers clearly?



Have you re-read each question to check you understood it properly the first time around?



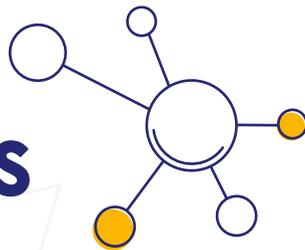
Have you covered up your answer to check you get the same solution when checking?



Physical Education

- ✓ **Read the question at least twice** before you start to answer it.
- ✓ **Underline/highlight** the key words in the question.
- ✓ **Look at how many marks the question is worth**, as this is how many points you will have to make.
- ✓ **Make a plan** before you start to answer the question. This will help you to structure your answer.
- ✓ **Tick off what you have used in your plan**, to make sure you have included everything.
- ✓ **Re-read the question** and your answer before you move onto the next question.
- ✓ **Attempt all questions**; if you are unsure have a guess.
- ✓ **Write in full sentences.**
- ✓ **Once you have answered** all of the questions, go back to the beginning of the test paper and re-read the question and your answer for each question.
- ✓ **Double check** that you have made the correct number of points for the marks available and given examples if required.
- ✓ **Revision Cards** – Key words and diagrams on one side, definition on the other side.
- ✓ **Mind maps** – Highlight keys information related to a topic.
- ✓ **Make revision fun** – Boards games (Snakes and Ladders, Connect 4)

Science Exams



Exam Tips

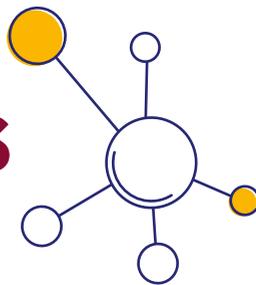


- For each Science examination you will have approximately one minute per mark.
- Make sure you've read all the information above and in the question. This is important and often gives some big clues.
- RTQ - Read the question, underline the key command words and circle any other relevant information. Check how many marks are available for the question.
- Answer the question you have actually been asked – not the one you think you have been asked.
- Don't forget to use the periodic tables and equation sheets given to you in your exam.

To Solve Calculation Questions:-

- Choose the correct equation.
- Rearrange the equation using the triangle method.
- Check all your units are correct.
- Substitute the numbers into the equation.
- Use your calculator to solve. You do not have to do it in your head.

Science Exams



Checking Your Work In Exams

- Have you answered everything?** Even a guess may get you a mark.
- If it is a 3 mark question** - Have you written 3 good reasons etc . . .?
- Check** spelling, punctuation and grammar in 6 mark questions.
- Re-read every question** to check you have understood what you were asked to do.
- Check every unit** is correct on your answers.
- Re-check** calculations.
- Confirm** that you have answered data and analysis questions accurately.
- DON'T just flick through the pages** – this is a waste of time.

Spanish Exams

GCSE Spanish (AQA) – all four skills equal 25% of the overall grade.

Foundation

Listening: 35 mins.

Reading: 45 mins. Inc. translation into English.

Writing: 1 hour, describe a photo, 40 word response, translation into Spanish and 90 word response.

Speaking: 7-9 mins. + preparation time, Role-play, photo card and general conversation.

Higher

Listening: 45 mins.

Reading: 1 hour inc. translation into English.

Writing: 1 hour 15 mins. 90 word response, translation into Spanish and 150 word response.

Speaking: 10-12 mins + preparation time..

Remember:

There is a choice of questions on the writing paper (90/150 word responses) do not answer every question in the paper.

When speaking/writing always

include opinions with reasons and more than one tense.

Always allow time to go back and make sure that your writing is accurate to avoid losing marks.

Chunking

Chunking is breaking up a big piece of information into smaller chunks rather like steps in a ladder. It can be used for numbers and words. Often students use bullet points to break up information.

The average person can take in four numbers or words at a time, can concentrate on revision for a maximum of 45 minutes at a time and remembers information best shortly before bedtime.

Chunked

- Remember 4 words/numbers at a time.
- Revision max 45 mins.
- Remember best before bedtime.



Mnemonics

Mnemonics help you to remember by using short words that stand for something to help you.

Here is a Mnemonic for REVISION.

- R** Rest
- E** Exercise
- V** Variety
- I** Imagination
- S** Structure
- I** Individual
- O** Ongoing
- N** Not too long

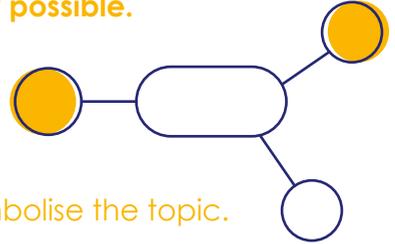


Association

Association helps a lot of people to remember, because it is much more powerful when we use our imagination. The idea is to link objects and ideas to each other in the craziest way possible.

Mind Maps - The Rules

- Use paper in landscape.
- Have a central image to symbolise the topic.
- Have wide main branches to organise ideas that taper out to the more detailed branches which have key words about the topic.



Mind maps (or spider diagrams) are good for remembering topics and sub-topics, such as characters in a book.

Two ways to practice with cards:

- Put the answers on the back, but you will need to remember more at once before you check.
- Use a piece of paper and move down to reveal answers as you guess the contents.



Visuals

- Make good use of drawings /diagrams in your revision.
- Use different colours.
- Replace key words /ideas /people/places with pictures.
- Create and put posters up around your home.

Flash Cards

Order and Sequence

Have a look through your notes/books and order or sequence the notes.

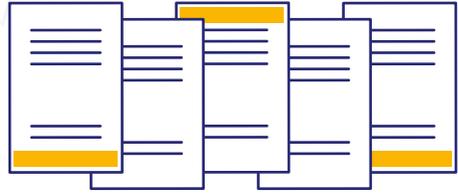
Place them in a logical sequence so you can see how things progress. You may find a more logical way of seeing things.

Reading out loud

Read your revision notes out loud to a

particular rhythm
– this could be set

by music playing in the background or tapping your foot or by walking calmly and steadily. This is a sort of walk and talk.



Podcasts

Make a recording for yourself to revise from. It could be you reading your notes out loud. It could be you singing your notes.

It could be you reading and then stopping to summarise what you have read (key words, ideas, phrases, quotations)

or

Asking questions on what you have covered. Listen to them as you lie in bed, walk to school, travel on the bus.

Highlighters

As you read through your notes use different coloured highlighters to pick out key words /themes/ideas/ points etc. You could try a different colour for each theme or topic.

There are revision websites where you can read revision notes and highlight as you go. You can use very small post-its to highlight things as you go along.

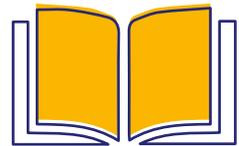


Underlining

• As you read through the work in your exercise book underline key words.



• You could come up with a predicted list before you start or you could make a list of the key words at the end.



• You could underline in different colours, patterns or lines like wiggly, thick etc.



Mental Journey

Write information on post-it notes and place them on the wall, door, large sheets of paper etc.

You can then rearrange them according to a variety of ideas:

- Group various things together.
- Organise them into what you know and don't know rearrange as you learn more.
- Follow trends or themes.



Question & Answer

Devise questions and answers about a topic for other people and quiz each other.

You could think of doing a "Who wants to be a millionaire" game where the questions are graded according to the difficulty you choose.

Turn your notes into...

-  Summarise your learning in 140 characters. Include a hashtag for key words.
-  Draw an in image that represents a particular topic.
-  Write a Facebook status about a character.

Remember and repeat three pieces of information after each lesson... BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you're probably right.

Summaries

Revision Links

www.gcsepod.com/students/

hegartymaths.com/login/learner

www.bbc.com/bitesize/levels/z98jmp3

www.linguascope.com/

Exam Boards

www.aqa.org.uk

www.Edexcel.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

www.cbac.co.uk

www.wjec.co.uk



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