

Top ten exam tips

Here are our top ten tips to help you get through your exams.

1. Find out about the exam

Know your enemy - find out as much as you can about the exam.

- How much is the exam worth to your overall mark in the subject?
- What type of exam is it? Is it a multiple choice, essay, open-book or take-home exam?
- Will there be a choice of questions or tasks?
- How much will each question or task be worth?



2. Ask for help

Don't feel bad if you need to ask for help. Talk to your teacher and pick the brains of other students. If you're feeling really stressed you might also find it helpful to speak to the school counselor.

3. Sort out your subject material

Check that you have all the relevant handouts and get all your notes together from the subject. Read through the subject matter and use it to organize the information you've collected.

It might help to write your own summaries of each textbook chapter or section of the subject guide. This will make it easier to find what you need while you're studying.

4. Check past exam papers

Get your hands on any old exam papers from the subject and familiarise yourself with the structure and format. Practise answering the questions within the specified time limits and check your answers against your notes to make sure you've got them right.

5. Know where to go

Check your exam timetable for details on when and where you'll be sitting the exam. Make sure you have everything you'll need to take with you (e.g. calculator, pencil, ruler, etc).

Try to do some study at the times your exams will be on. If you have an early morning exam it's a good idea to practise getting up and doing some study earlier in the day.

6. Don't cram

Stick to what you already know when studying the night before an exam. You'll only make yourself nervous if you try to learn new information. Review your notes or test yourself on key points.

7. Keep your cool

Don't talk to other students about the exam before the exam. It could confuse you or make you lose confidence in yourself.

The same goes for after the exam. Don't hang around talking about what was on it or you'll start to doubt yourself and stress out if you think you made a mistake.

8. Use your reading time

The way you use your reading time could make or break you in the exam. Use it to plan your writing time and start thinking about some answers.

Read the instructions very carefully then scan the whole exam paper. Be sure to check how many pages there are and how much each question is worth.

Plan how much time to spend on each answer and the order in which you'll answer them. Start with the questions you're most confident with.

9. Break the questions down

A great tip for any exam is to break the questions down to make sure you really understand what you're being asked. If you don't answer the question properly you won't get full marks for it.

Look for the key parts in the question and these will give you clues on how to answer it. For example, for the question, "Explain the difference between study and revision", you can split this question into four parts:

1. **Explain** - give reasons to show how or why something is the way it is
2. **The difference** - what are the distinguishing factors between study and revision?
3. **Study** - what is study?
4. **Revision**- what is revision?

10. Review your performance

While there's no use stressing out over an exam you've already done, it does help to look at what you can improve on. If you didn't do as well on an exam as you would've liked, ask your teacher if you can go through it with them and find out what you did wrong.

Come up with your own strategies

Remember - these tips are only some of the things that you can do to get the most out of your exams. There might be other things that work even better for you.

Ask around - find out what your friends do for their exams - maybe some of their tricks will work for you too! Maybe your teachers have some good recommendations too.

Whatever it is, whatever strategy when you find something that works for you, put it into practise and good luck!

