

# Exam Top Tips

## Revision

- ✓ Set realistic goals. You are only expected to do your best.
- ✓ Create a realistic revision timetable. Prioritise and plan what you are going to revise and when, but remember to be flexible too.
- ✓ Revision should be an active process. Practice in recalling what you have been taught. Make notes of your notes, highlighting all of the key points. Use different colours for different ideas. You could draw 'spider diagrams' or 'mind maps' to connect different but related revision topics visually. Summarise the key points for each topic at the end of your notes. You could even make up rhymes or songs, (mnemonics), to help you learn and remember information better.
- ✓ Practice answering questions and assessing your answers. Using past exam papers can be a really good way of testing yourself on the topics you have just revised. These papers will show you the format, mark scheme and the style of the questions you will be asked, which means you will not be thrown by any of these on the day. By practising the exam questions you can give yourself a rough idea of how long each sort of question will take you and so be able to divide up your time sensibly for the actual exam. If you have been able to get hold of a lot of past papers you will soon realise that some of the same sorts of questions come up year after year. Knowing this will go some way to building up your confidence.
- ✓ Minimise distractions by turning off the TV and your mobile and combat boredom by taking plenty of breaks – about ten minutes every hour.
- ✓ Reward yourself. When you've worked hard and achieved one of your goals, reward yourself.
- ✓ Whether this is going out, having a relaxing bath or catching up with friends, look after yourself and give your brain a rest. Different methods work for different people and for different styles of exams so find what works best for you!

## **Last-minute revision**

This is not recommended but most of us have found ourselves in this situation before.

- ✓ Do not give up – you can still make a difference.
- ✓ Try not to panic – you probably know more than you think you do.
- ✓ Try to focus on the areas that you feel you understand and go over these. Do not stay up cramming all night, keeping yourself awake with endless coffee or sugary sweets. However good an idea this seems to you, you will not thank yourself when you wake up on the morning of the exam with a banging headache and bleary eyed from lack of sleep! You need to be fresh, so try to have an early night.

## **Exam stress**

Most of us get stressed about exams but this stress can affect us in different ways. For some people, the adrenalin and pressure can have a positive effect but others may find themselves filled with anxiety.

Experiment with ways to relax and find what works for you – any or all of the following may help:

- ✓ Talk over any worries you may have with friends and family
- ✓ Eat a balanced healthy diet
- ✓ Exercise well
- ✓ Get plenty of sleep.

## On your exam day

- ✓ Eat breakfast - even if you feel queasy - as food will help you concentrate.
- ✓ Check you have all the materials you need in a clear pencil case before you leave the house.
- ✓ Remember that some exams may allow you to bring a calculator.
- ✓ Bring a clear bottle of water with the label removed.
- ✓ Arrive early at the exam room and try to relax.
- ✓ Try to avoid talking about the exam with your classmates. This can be difficult, but trying to second guess what topics you will be tested on is liable to stress you out and confuse you.
- ✓ Listen to the exam rules.
- ✓ Make sure you have not brought your mobile phone into the exam room (even if it is switched off), you will not need it.
- ✓ Make sure you fill out all the relevant details on the front of your exam paper in clear capitals before you open the paper.
- ✓ Read the whole paper from cover to cover, looking carefully at any directions you are given.
- ✓ Make sure you know how many questions you are required to answer.
- ✓ Underline key words in the questions (describe, discuss, compare, contrast, evaluate etc).
- ✓ Essay-based questions: Plan the amount of time you can realistically take for each part of the paper and stick to this.
- ✓ Plan your answers before you start writing, as this will show the examiner the direction you wanted to take even if you didn't have time to go there.
- ✓ Leave space at the bottom of your answers so that if you think of any other ideas during the exam you can add them in at the end.
- ✓ Read through your answers and check spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- ✓ Revision is hard and definitely easier said than done, but don't give up. Try to keep exams in perspective – nothing is the end of the world – and do your best on the day