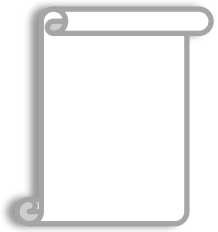
HOW TO STUDY FOR YOUR DIFFERENT SUBJECTS

This guide contains a general overview of how to study for high school's most common core subjects — English, Math, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, History and Classics. The way you study for your English exam is going to be very different to the way you study for your Math exam, so it's important to be thinking about how to study in the most effective way for each subject. You can adapt the study techniques described in this guide for any other similar subjects.

ENGLISH



Your English exam is probably going to be made up mostly of essays, and therefore, to study for your exam, **you need to write PRACTICE ESSAYS**. Obviously you can't be certain of the *exact* essay questions that you'll get asked in the exam, but you should know what *sort* of questions you're *likely* to get asked.

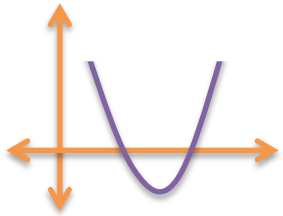
This means, you don't need to study specifically for every possible essay question. For example, if you studied a novel this year, it's likely that one essay question option might ask you to write about the novel's main character. Rather than studying for every possible essay question about the main character, make sure you understand the main character *really well*, and practice *adapting* what you know to answer any essay question on the main character.

We recommend that you pick around **3 main topics** to study really well (e.g. main character, central themes, key incident) that you are likely to be asked about, study those thoroughly, and practice adapting essays for different essay questions based on those topics.

AND — when you're writing your practice essays during your exam study:

1. Use questions from **past years' exams**. They should be very similar to the ones you get asked in your exam this year!
2. Always make an **Essay Plan** first.
3. Make sure your essay has **proper structure** and that the paragraphs follow the **S.E.X.I. structure** (your Essay Plans will help you achieve this!).

MATH

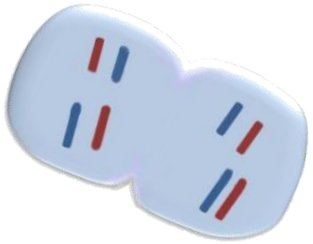


In your math exam you might have to write a few sentences here and there, but for the most part, you'll probably be solving problems.

The only way to master math problems in the exam is to complete a whole lot of practice questions during the course of your exam study. Keep these things in mind:

- Studying for your math exam might seem very repetitive, but there's no other way.
- To give yourself time to practice solving the types of math problems that will come up in the exam, **you need to start practising solving problems as early as you can.** You can't study adequately for math in the week just before the exam, because this won't give you time to become proficient at answering all of the different types of math problems the exam is going to throw at you. You need time to build on your knowledge.
- When you were a kid and learnt your times tables, you didn't learn them overnight — it took a lot of time going over and over them until they were impossible to forget! Just like your times tables — you want to have done enough practice problems by the time of your math exam that you can answer most questions without having to think too hard about how to do them.
- **Our tip for getting your best possible grade in math — attempt as many past years' exams as you can.**
- The types of questions you will get asked and the layout of YOUR exam this year should be very similar to past years' exams, which is why past exams papers are such an awesome study tool.

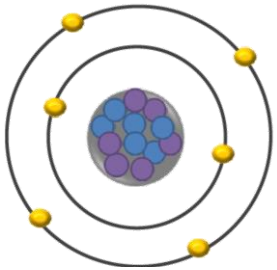
BIOLOGY



Studying for biology involves learning a lot of concepts *and* facts, and therefore, your biology study time should be spent mostly **writing study notes**. Keep the following things in mind:

- Writing stuff down in the form of study notes is one of the best ways to **understand and retain information**.
- During the week before your exam make sure you read over your study notes at least twice to help **consolidate** everything you have studied.
- **Drawing diagrams** in your study notes is also a great way to understand and remember concepts and biological structures (like cells and cell processes!). Often a picture is a lot easier to recall when you're in an exam than a huge paragraph of text!
- **Watching videos** that explain biological concepts can also be a huge help for your understanding of how things work. **YouTube** and **Khan Academy** are your friends!

CHEMISTRY



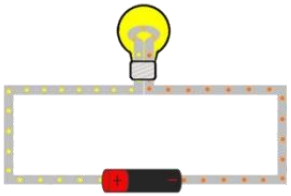
Chemistry is one of those subjects that involve a mixture of **writing/explaining** (e.g. explain why sodium is more reactive than calcium) *and* **solving equations** (e.g. balancing a hydration reaction between potassium and water).

- For the **written-type questions**, making **study notes** is the best thing you can do to remember as much as possible.
- For the **equation-type questions**, you need to **practice** them a lot (just like for math!).

To best prepare for exam questions, we recommend you use **revision books** with **practice questions** based on real exam questions. Make sure you use books specific to your curriculum and year level. This is one of the best ways to get prepared for what's going to be in the exam!

Drawing diagrams in your study notes is also great for chemistry study. For example, it's much easier to remember the structure of an atom if you practice *drawing* atoms, as opposed to just *writing* about electrons, protons, and neutrons.

PHYSICS



As for chemistry, your physics exam will probably consist of **writing/explaining-type questions** (e.g. explain the forces acting on a falling object) and **solving/equation-type questions** (e.g. calculate the kinetic energy of a moving object).

For the **written answers**:

- You're going to need to show the examiner that you *understand* what you're writing about. Therefore, it's a good idea to **write study notes** about the concepts that are likely to come up in the exam (just like for biology!).
- **Writing study notes is one of the best ways to remember a lot of information**. AND — writing out your physics concepts will instantly show you what you don't understand well enough and need to study further.

For the **solving/equation-type questions**, the only way to prepare for these is to complete a lot of **practice questions** (just like for math!).

For all types of questions, **watching videos** that explain the concepts will probably be really helpful too, as a lot of physics concepts can be tricky to wrap your head around!

HISTORY & CLASSICS

Assuming your History and Classics exams consist of essay questions, then as for English, you need to **write practice essays** until you feel confident that you can answer any question that gets thrown at you.

How to write your practice essays...

1. You probably don't know the *exact* essay questions the exam is going to ask, but you *should* know what **general topics** the questions will be based around (e.g. the cause of WWI, the effect of colonization on Indigenous peoples, the significance of the Roman Empire on modern civilizations…).
2. Pick at least 3 general topics to study that you think the exam essay questions are likely to focus on, and study those topics **thoroughly.** In the exam, you should be able to answer any essay question on your chosen topics by **adapting what you know** to answer the specific essay questions on those topics. So the GOOD NEWS is, you don't need to study specifically for *every* possible essay question you could be asked, because you just need to adapt what you know to answer the specific question! (Just as for English — see page 2 above).
3. Use questions from **past years' exams** to write practice essays on the topics you've chosen to study. These questions should be fairly (if not very) similar to what you'll get asked this year.
4. Remember to make a quick **Essay Plan** before you write your practice essays! (And of course, for the real ones too!)

To get a *really good* grade, make sure you know some **relevant facts** off by heart, and throw in a few **insightful points** you have thought of yourself, so you can show the examiner you *really* know your stuff.

EXTRA TIPS

- If you have an exam for a subject we haven't covered, we apologize! HOWEVER — you should be able to apply the tips we've discussed above to your other subjects.
- For example — you will be able to use the tips about essay writing for **any subject** that requires you to **write essays** in the exam. Even science exams require essay writing sometimes!
- Likewise — you'll be able to use the tips for math for any subject that requires you to **solve problems** or **involves numbers** (like accounting).
- Whatever the subjects you're taking this year, the **MOST IMPORTANT THING** for you to do in the exam is to **READ THE QUESTION PROPERLY.**
- You will have been told this before, but think about it — what use is it if you write a brilliant answer in almost every way, but you **don't actually answer the question** being asked?! There's no way the examiner can give you a good grade if you didn't really answer the question.
- And lastly, to pick up **bonus marks**, leave at least **10 minutes** of time at the end of your exams to quickly look over what you've written. You'll be amazed at how many silly little mistakes you will have made (particularly in number-heavy subjects like math)! You might also see where you have forgotten to mention something in an answer, and can add that little bit extra to make your answers even better.

Head to www.thestudygurus.com for more advice about studying and high school exam preparation

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