





How to succeed in exams?



Have you ever experienced these?

-  I could not complete the exam paper as I have spent too much time in the earlier sections.
-  I fail to finish writing my exam paper as I am stuck with some difficult questions.
-  I find it hard to select the correct answers from multiple-choice questions.
-  It is difficult for me to write good answers to exam essay questions.



General Advice

1. Read the instructions carefully before attempting any question

- Some students may start working on the exam papers immediately after they are given the “go” signal. You may miss out some important information that facilitates your work in the given time limit. You may even waste time doing extra work or lose marks.
- For instance, the instructions may tell you the number of questions you need to answer in each section. For multiple-choice questions, you may be asked to select the BEST answer at one time, but you may be asked to select ALL possible answers at another time.
- Spend a few minutes to read through the instructions and highlight the requirements of each section before you move forward.



General Advice

2. Allocate your working time wisely

- Before you attempt any question, estimate the time required and allocate sufficient time for each section, especially the latter parts. You may refer to the percentage of mark distribution for time allocation.
- For example, spend no more than 30 minutes on each essay question if you need to attempt 3 questions carrying equal marks with a time limit of 90 minutes. You may allocate less amount of time on multiple-choice questions and “spare” a bit more time for essay questions.



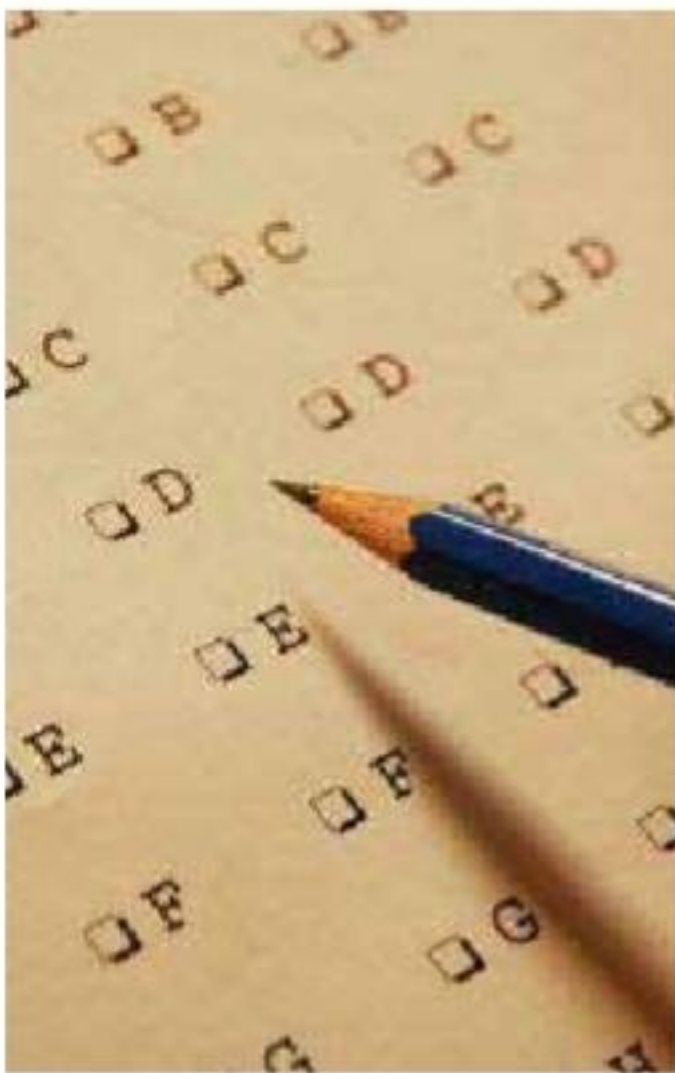
General Advice

3. Attempt the easy questions first



- You are not required to complete the exam questions in sequence. It may be better to answer the easy questions first and get the marks. This helps building your confidence as you progress through the exam.
- When encountering questions that you are not sure about, you can always make a mark and skip them. This avoids spending too much time on a few difficult questions, leaving you insufficient time to complete the other questions. Go back to these questions afterwards when you have completed the easier ones.

Advice for Taking Multiple-Choice Exams



1. Highlight the important words in the questions

- By highlighting the important words in the questions, you are able to identify the key concepts being examined. The key words help to activate your schema and retrieval of your memory related to the concepts. This also helps you to identify the tricky parts of the questions and to avoid losing marks.
- For instance, instead of asking you for the correct statement, some questions may want you to identify the statement that is NOT correct.

Advice for Taking Multiple-Choice Exams

2. Read all the choices first before selecting the correct answer

- Some students may select the first choice of the question that **looked** correct to them. However, this may not be the **best** answer. Reading through all the choices can help you identify not only the good answers, but also the **best** answers for the questions.

3. Identify the distracters and eliminate them

- Sometimes, it may be much easier to find out the wrong answers instead of the right ones. In that case, eliminate those distracters to help you focus on the remaining choices. This may increase your chance of getting the correct answers.

Advice for Taking Essay Exams

1. Identify the key concepts being examined in the question

- Highlight and list out the key concepts required in answering the questions. This ensures that you will not miss out any important concept and facilitates you to give a comprehensive answer.

Advice for Taking Essay Exams

2. Draft an outline before you write

- Spend a few minutes to write down your key points and organize them in a logical manner before writing your answer. You may refer to the following template to draft your essay outline:

Key Concept (1)

- Supporting point (A) / Key words (A)
- Supporting point (B) / Key words (B)
- Supporting point (C) / Key words (C)

Key Concept (2)

- Supporting point (A) / Key words (A)
- Supporting point (B) / Key words (B)
- Supporting point (C) / Key words (C)

Key Concept (3)

- Supporting point (A) / Key words (A)
- Supporting point (B) / Key words (B)
- Supporting point (C) / Key words (C)

Advice for Taking Essay Exams

3. Organize your answers by including an Introduction, a Body, and a Conclusion

• A well-organized essay will help improve the overall impression of your answers and make your points stand out much clearer to the markers. Use the following template for organizing your essay:

Introduction

- Rephrase the question into a statement
- Illustrate your stance and position towards the question
- Illustrate the flow of your essay (e.g. What will you cover in your essay? What are you going to discuss first? What's next and so on?)

Body

- Main point (1)
 - Use one topic sentence to clearly state your main point
 - Provide supporting evidences
 - Use a short concluding sentence to restate your main point
- Main point (2)
 - Use one topic sentence to clearly state your main point
 - Provide supporting evidences
 - Use a short concluding sentence to restate your main point
- Main point (3)
 - Use one topic sentence to clearly state your main point
 - Provide supporting evidences
 - Use a short concluding sentence to restate your main point

Conclusion

- Summarize your contents and main arguments
- Conclude your stance and position towards the question

Advice for Taking Essay Exams

4. Leave margins and spaces as you write

- Leave margins on all sides of your answer or leave a few empty lines between paragraphs. You can therefore add in some missing points as you revise your essay. Your markers will also find it more comfortable to read your essay and may even leave you some comments for improvements.

Advice for Taking Essay Exams

Recap

General Advices

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Advices for Taking Multiple-Choice Exams

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2. Read all the choices first before selecting the correct answer
3. Identify the distracters and eliminate them

Advices for Taking Essay Exams

1. Identify the key concepts required in the question
2. Draft an outline before you write
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