

Exam and Revision Tips

Written by Philip McAllister

Monday, 27 September 2010 14:54 - Last Updated Monday, 27 September 2010 15:05

- Getting started is the most difficult bit. And telling you that you should have started earlier doesn't help. But the '10-minute rule' will, whether you are up-to-date with your revision or still at the starting post.
 - Forget four-hour sessions where you do only 10 minutes in that time. Get real – and start with the ten minutes you know that you will do. Have a 10-minute break and start again, for another 10 minutes. You can do that.
 - When working, work. When relaxing, relax. The two don't mix. Remember that.
 - No phoning friends, looking out of the window or playing with the cat in that time. And your room can wait for another few years before you tidy it up.
 - So now you have started and doubled the amount of work you normally do in an evening, all within 30 minutes of starting. But don't stop there. Build up the working periods to 30 minutes or so at a time – and keep the breaks at 10.
 - Now you are working. Don't think about it, just do it – and do it now. Congratulate yourself for having done it. You've made a start. Keep going.
 - You are in training and you need to pace yourself in the lead-up to your exams and between exams too. Discipline and technique play their part, but so too does common sense.
 - Staring into space won't help but the '10-minute rule' will whenever you have difficulty in starting something. Remember it and practise it, along with the other hints and tips given here.
 - Choose the tips that suit your way of working best.

Manage your time and plan

- Know where and when your exams are and the work you have to do.
- Highlight your notes or abbreviate them on cards, so that the information can be referred to easily. But don't spend all of your time doing it.
 - Practise on past exam papers.
 - Ease in an extra half hour of work a day at least, by getting up earlier or taking less time over lunch. Over five days that will give you a minimum of two-and-a-half hours of quality study time.
 - You could then treat yourself to a night out. You deserve it.
 - Cover two or three subjects in the one evening. Start with the one you dislike most and then look forward to finishing with the one you like best. Otherwise you will spend all evening working on the one you enjoy, without doing the others.
 - You can work with a friend if you really do work.
 - Change the places you work, to add variety – the school library, your home or the local library.
 - And if you get stuck, ask a teacher for some help. They are anxious too, that you do well.

Be warned

- Make sure you know what equipment you will need for each exam and who is to provide it.

Exam and Revision Tips

Written by Philip McAllister

Monday, 27 September 2010 14:54 - Last Updated Monday, 27 September 2010 15:05

- Check you don't have two exams at the same time. Alternative arrangements need to be made.
- Don't cheat or break any rules. You could be disqualified or even arrested. Mobile phones are a menace and barred from the exam room. Don't take one in.
- Don't cram the night before an exam.
- Have a leisurely breakfast and walk to school, if possible. Be there in good time.
- Avoid friends outside the exam room. They could confuse you. Keep your thoughts to yourself and concentrate on the exam. That's why you are there.

In the exam room

- Take six deep breaths, ignore everyone else and concentrate solely on what you have to do.
- Have a glucose sweet, to boost energy to your brain - but don't crunch.
- Read the instructions on the exam papers carefully - do the appropriate number of questions from the right sections, and answer compulsory questions.
- Know how many marks each question carries - don't spend too long on any one. Use the number of marks on the paper as a guide.
- Read questions carefully before you write anything. Time is allowed for this. Use that time to choose your questions, and write notes on the question paper to help you remember later.
- Make sure you answer the question asked. No marks if you don't.
- If you run out of time, more marks can be gained by completing your remaining answers in outline only. State what you would do and how to do it, by outlining your main arguments in an essay – without writing the essay – and by jotting down formulae in science – stating how you would complete the question – without doing the calculations.

After the exam

- Don't worry about the exam you have just taken - you can't do anything about it now. Concentrate instead on the next one, where you can influence the result.
- Avoid friends again if they want to discuss the exam paper. That can be unsettling.
- Put the exam paper in a drawer at home and look at it again only with your grandchildren.

Don't panic

- Being calm and thoughtful will help you to get the most out of your preparation.

And if all else fails, remember that Churchill and Einstein didn't do too well at school. Good luck.