

# PREPARING FOR EXAMS

A 'how to' guide for students



This guide aims to help answer your questions and provide you with advice and tips on:

- how to revise;
- looking after your mental health and wellbeing; and
- knowing and understanding exam guidelines.

**The best way to feel less anxious about exams is to plan and prepare in advance, so let's get started!**



## Your exam journey

You may have accessed your exam timetable online, or your school may have given you a copy on paper. Either way, you could say your exam journey has now started.

## What do you do now?

1. **Get to know your exam timetable** – When you receive your timetable, identify and highlight every exam that you are expecting to sit. If you think something is missing, bring this to the attention of your school's examination officer.

Keep your timetable somewhere you can easily find it. For example, take a photo of it and store it on your phone, or stick it on your mirror at home or inside your locker at school – whatever works for you.

Ask your teachers or parents/carers any questions you have about your timetable.

2. **Plan your revision schedule** – You can search online for ideas to help with this, and use your timetable as a guide.
3. **Start revising** – Everybody revises differently. What may work for your friends or classmates may not necessarily work for you. Find a way that does work for you, and stick to it.

Also, revision doesn't need to be boring – you can be creative!

- Ask a friend to test you with questions. This will help you know areas you are good at and which areas require further revision.
- Set up a revision music playlist to keep you motivated.
- Make mind maps or use Post-it notes in your textbooks.
- Use flash cards. This is a way of training your brain in short, quick bursts to remember things you'll need to know in your exams. Give them a go and practise with your friends!

### Advance Information

For CCEA Summer 2023 exams, Advance Information will be provided for the majority of GCSE, AS and A level qualifications. This will be made available on CCEA's website from Monday 27 February 2023. **It is important to note that Advance Information is to aid your revision; it will not tell you what is on your exam.**





# TOP TIPS

## Top tips for preparing for an exam

Everyone is different. Find a **revision style** that **works for you**.

Give yourself **time**. Use your exam timetable to choose when to start revising.

Know which topics you need to revise.

Draw up an **action plan**. You may find useful ideas for this online, for example at BBC Bitesize [Revision: timetables and planning](#).

If you need silence and your house is noisy, try a library or another venue you know to be quiet and safe.

Complete some **past papers**. This will allow you to see how the exam papers look and the way exam questions are written. It will also give you an opportunity to practise how to answer the questions.

Keep your energy levels up – have snacks handy (healthy snacks are even better!).

**Stay hydrated.**

Try not to stay up late; get plenty of **sleep**.

Treat yourself!

Build in some time out – **look after** your mental health and wellbeing.

## Looking after your health and wellbeing

Looking after your health and wellbeing is so important. There are many ways to do this – once again, everyone is different. Below are some ideas to get you started.



If you're feeling nervous, try clearing your head by planning activities away from revision. Check in with your friends – they might also need help.

If you're feeling anxious or stressed, many people believe in practising **mindfulness** or **meditation** to help. You can search online for activities that focus on breathing exercises and other methods to relax the body and mind. They are quite easy to do – even when you're in the exam hall!



## Exam guidelines

There are some important exam room guidelines you need to know, to help you prepare for your exam and make sure you follow all the rules.



- No watches, including smart watches, can be taken into the exam hall.
- Leave all electronic devices at home or in your school locker. As well as smart watches, these include:
  - mobile phones
  - smart tablets
  - iPods
  - MP3/4 players or similar devices
  - wireless earphones
  - electronic dictionaries.
- Ensure all labels are removed from water bottles before you enter the examination room.

If the exam is about to start and you remember that you have accidentally brought a mobile phone or electronic device into the exam hall, tell the invigilator immediately.



No one wants to accidentally break the rules and end up being disqualified from a qualification. It's important you know and understand what the rules are.



## Exam day

**1.** Finally, the date you have been preparing for has arrived. Don't panic – you've got this! You need to go into the exam room relaxed, well rested and feeling prepared, so make sure you get plenty of sleep the night before and you have everything packed that you need to bring to the exam.



**2.** If it's a morning exam, have your alarm set early so that you will reach your exam in plenty of time.

**7.** Invigilators are there to supervise students and make sure that all rules are being followed, but they are also there to help. For example, if you need extra paper, raise your hand and they will bring this to you.

**8.** Clocks will be located in the exam hall to help you monitor your timekeeping.



**3.** Remember all that fuel your body needed during revision? It's just as important now, so get a good breakfast and stay hydrated.



**9.** Check the title on the exam paper you are given, and make sure it is the correct subject and level.

**4.** When you get to your exam, double check that you have left your watch and any electronic devices outside the exam hall.

**10.** Ensure you clearly write your candidate and centre numbers on the answer booklets provided.



**5.** If you're feeling nervous at this point, don't panic. Nerves are normal. You are not alone!



**11.** Once you have been told to start, open the examination paper. Take your time to read and understand the instructions on the paper.

**6.** When you take your seat, your exam invigilator will guide you through the process. Listen closely to what they say.

**12.** The invigilator will tell you when the examination is finished. If you are entitled to extra time as part of an Access Arrangement, make sure you use this time, as you need it to complete your exam and/or to check your work.



**Stay calm and positive – you can only do your best!**

## After the exam

You've finished – well done! It's now time to try to relax. This could be hanging out with your friends, watching a film, going to the gym or going to the library – whatever works for you! Do something you enjoy to help you unwind.

**Remember, exam results do not define you!**



For more information on preparing for exams and on 2021/22 assessment arrangements, visit [www.ccea.org.uk/summer-2023](http://www.ccea.org.uk/summer-2023)

For more information on mental health and wellbeing visit: [www.ccea.org.uk/summer-2023/mental-health-wellbeing](http://www.ccea.org.uk/summer-2023/mental-health-wellbeing)



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