

How to use your examination time

It is all too easy to rush into answering your examination paper once you have downloaded it and the clock starts ticking. But this would be a mistake. Examiners' regularly comment that candidates who plan their answers carefully achieve better marks in the examinations. Here are some tips on how to use the time to maximum effect:

Tip 1: Do read the instructions on the front cover of the examination paper. They may differ one from another!

Tip 2: Do spend time reading the paper through, ensuring that you have read each question correctly. It is all too easy to misread a question in the pressure of an examination! Look at the number of questions, remembering to check the final page. We will always put **END OF PAPER** on the last page.

Tip 3: When reading the paper, mark up key words as you go along, to help you focus on the context and the question. You are permitted to write notes on the examination paper to help with idea generation.

Tip 4: Decide which order you plan to answer the questions. Some people prefer to answer the 'easier' questions first; others prefer to answer the more 'difficult' questions at the beginning. The choice is yours. Whatever order you choose, ensure that you number your answers clearly in your answer book so the examiner knows exactly which question they are marking. If you decide not to answer the question in numerical order, do make sure you don't miss any out by mistake

Tip 5: Work out a time plan. Decide how long you are going to spend on each question and stick to it. You can always re-visit an unfinished question when you have finished the paper. It is really important to try and complete all the questions.

Tip 6: Use the mark allocation shown as a guide to how much you need to write. For example, a question worth 2 marks is unlikely to require an entire page of text or several lines of calculations; however for a question worth 10 marks, two sentences or two lines of calculation are unlikely to attract full marks.

Tip 7: Leave sufficient time before the examination finishes to complete a review of all your answers.

Tip 8: Do show your working if you are required to complete a calculation. Even if the answer is wrong, you may be awarded marks for the steps you have taken. Incorrect numerical answers where no working is shown are likely to score zero marks. In the case of multiple choice questions, where there is only one correct answer to a question, method marks are not given. But always read the instructions given at the beginning of the paper.

Tip 9: Use the full time available to you in the examination. If you have completed your answers with time to spare, use the remaining time to review your answers again, to identify any areas where you might be able to add value and increase your grade.

Tip 10: Ensure you leave sufficient time to upload your script at the end of the examination. The time you have is quite limited and you should allow for unforeseen events that may delay this. **Don't** leave it to the final 5 minutes that you are allowed.

Tip 11: Experience has shown that during 'open-book' assessments you will need to balance your time between referring to available materials and answering the questions. Remember that the examinations will be testing your ability to show understanding of the subject and its application to specific situations. We therefore recommend that you are fully prepared by developing a good understanding of the content of the subjects you are being examined on.