A young African woman with short dark hair is smiling at the camera. She is wearing a white ribbed off-the-shoulder top, blue jeans, and pink headphones around her neck. She is carrying a black backpack and holding several books in her left hand. The background shows a school hallway with other students.

# THE LITTLE GUIDE TO EXAMINATION PREPARATION



Future Managers  
SIYAFUNDA • SIYAKHULA

# Introduction



An examination series can be one of the most stressful times of any student's life. Students often feel they need creative ideas to help them cope with stress.

In this booklet, we provide some handy information, tips and hints on how to prepare for that examination day you've been working so hard towards. Maybe you've left it for the last minute – not ideal, but we've got advice for that too.

Everyone has different ways of learning and not all methods suit every person. You need to find what works for you and what causes you the least stress, so that by the time you write the examinations you are ready to achieve the best marks!

Many students focus on cramming as much information into their brains as possible, and then hoping that they will remember everything on the day. For this to work, your brain – and your body – need to be at their optimal performance levels. This means physically, mentally and emotionally.

Use this guide in conjunction with **THE LITTLE GUIDE TO MAXIMISING KNOWLEDGE POTENTIAL** and find the formula that works for you.

Once you find that sweet spot, you will ace your examinations every time. Just remember, different situations demand different kinds of preparation. Be flexible, allow yourself some downtime and believe in yourself. You need to achieve your own personal best; it's not a competition against your classmates.

**BEST OF LUCK!**

# Contents

## A Preparing for examinations ▪ 4

- 1 Create a study space
- 2 Get help for any learning difficulty
- 3 Organise your time
- 4 Prepare your info packs
- 5 Draw up checklists
- 6 Reinforce your knowledge
- 7 Check in with your peers
- 8 Don't be a crash test dummy
- 9 Ask for help

## B Managing your stress ▪ 10

- 1 Just breathe
- 2 Make scents of it all
- 3 Use a stress buster
- 4 Get enough rest
- 5 Follow a healthy diet
- 6 Exercise regularly
- 7 Try natural remedies

## C The day before ▪ 14

- 1 Focus on weaknesses, refresh your strengths
- 2 Update your info pack
- 3 Check your checklists
- 4 What if you cannot write the examination?

## D The day of the examination ▪ 16

- 1 Have a healthy breakfast
- 2 Check one more time
- 3 Go in early
- 4 Be at the exam room before the time

## E During the examination ▪ 18

- 1 Set up your writing space
- 2 Read through the paper before you begin
- 3 Ask questions for clarity
- 4 Relax
- 5 Focus on what you write
- 6 Deal with moments of anxiety
- 7 Use remaining time wisely

## F After the examination ▪ 22

- 1 Rest and recover
- 2 Check your answer papers

## G Resources ▪ 23

- 1 Checklists
- 2 Command verbs/words
- 3 Exam water recipe



# A. Preparing for examinations

## 1 Create a study space

- Create a study area that you use for studying only. If you only have your room, set a small table to one side. Avoid your bed – that is where you sleep and should not be associated with stress.
- Have everything handy while you study, from stationery to scents, snacks and lots of water.

## 2 Get help for any learning difficulty

If you have a condition or learning difficulty that means you need extra help, support or concessions, you should report this to the school or college. You do not *have* to report it, but if you don't, the college cannot be held accountable and you lose out on important support.

Every school or college has their own requirements – find out from the bursar what you need to do. A medical report will definitely be needed.

Most TVET colleges have a DSU (Disability Support Unit) that will help students with, among other services, emotional support, assistive devices, examinations and test concessions or extensions, an examination reader and scribe, a dedicated examination venue and a calendar of events.

In addition, the DSU will also provide Translation Language and Communication (TLC) services, forms of live assistance and intermediaries, including guides, amanuensis and professional sign language interpreters as well as software programs.

### ASK FOR HELP

You may be entitled to:

- extra time
- a dedicated examination venue
- a scribe, reader and/or prompt
- a translator or interpreter.

Take every opportunity to perform at your best.



### 3 Organise your time

Time is limited, so use it wisely. Create study schedules and allot the required amount of time you feel you need on each subject. Then add one extra afternoon to each subject just in case and if, by the time you get to that extra day and feel confident you know your work, you have time to focus on something else you may be stressed about.

Avoid cramming at the last minute. Create the schedule the moment you have your examination dates. The earlier you start, the more work you will cover and the more time you will have for revision closer to the examination date.

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
6 Nov	7 Nov	8 Nov	9 Nov	10 Nov	11 Nov	12 Nov
AM 8am–12pm	Travel & tourism (2.5h)	English (2h)	8am Doc appt Mathematics	Business studies	CHILL DAY	Mathematics
LUNCH						
PM 2pm–5pm	Travel & tourism	English	Design prep	Mathematics	Business studies	Engagement party Amy & Liam
SUPPER & WALK	GYM	OUTREACH	GYM	RELAX		Mathematics
EVE 7pm–9pm	Travel & tourism	English	Design prep	Mathematics	Business studies	
13 NOV	14 NOV	15 NOV	16 NOV	17 NOV	18 NOV	19 NOV
AM 8am–12pm	Mathematics	Business studies	Geography 0460/22 (1.5h)	Mathematics	Business studies	Geography
LUNCH					CHILL DAY	
PM 1pm–5pm	Mathematics (1.5h)	Business studies (1.5h)	Mathematics	Mathematics (2.5h)	Business studies (1.5h)	Geography
SUPPER & WALK	GYM	OUTREACH	GYM	RELAX		
EVE 7pm–9pm	Business studies	Geography	Mathematics	Business studies		
20 NOV	21 NOV	22 NOV	23 NOV	24 NOV	25 NOV	26 NOV
AM 8am–12pm	Geography	Geography (3h)	Geography	Geography (1.75h)	Design prep	CHILL DAY
LUNCH						
PM 1pm–5pm	3.30pm Physio	Geography	Geography		Design prep	Design prep
SUPPER & WALK	GYM	OUTREACH	GYM	RELAX		
EVE 7pm–9pm						

- 1 Create a table of all the days available until the end of the examination series.
- 2 Break down each day into a morning session, lunch time, afternoon session, dinner time and evening session.
- 3 Insert your examination dates and the sessions they fit into.
- 4 Insert any other appointments or commitments during that time.
- 5 Count the slots that are left. This is the time you have to study.
- 6 Fill in the subjects you need to write. Rate them in importance from needing a lot of time to study (e.g. Business Studies) to not so much (e.g. English Writing).
- 7 Provide a study slot for each examination on the day before that examination. Then allocate the rest of the slots to fill the schedule.
- 8 Build in a rest period of a few hours after every examination. Use this to catch up on sleep and recharge your battery before you begin studying for the next examination.
- 9 Allow for 2–3 sessions a week where you have nothing allocated. This is the 'fat' on your schedule. If you are sick or need to reschedule a session, use these slots to absorb the impact.

## 4 Prepare your info packs



### REFERENCE

Refer to **THE LITTLE GUIDE TO MAXIMISING KNOWLEDGE POTENTIAL** for more information on how to put together info packs.

During your study sessions, use a folder, leverarch file or plastic envelope to create your info packs, one pack per subject.

Keep them organised per grade or level. If you find that content in, say, Level 4 is relevant to Level 5 as well, make a copy (rewriting is a great way of reinforcing knowledge) and add it to your Level 5 info pack. This way you know that each pack is complete on its own.

Keep your info packs until you have completed college. You never know when you may need to refer to the information.

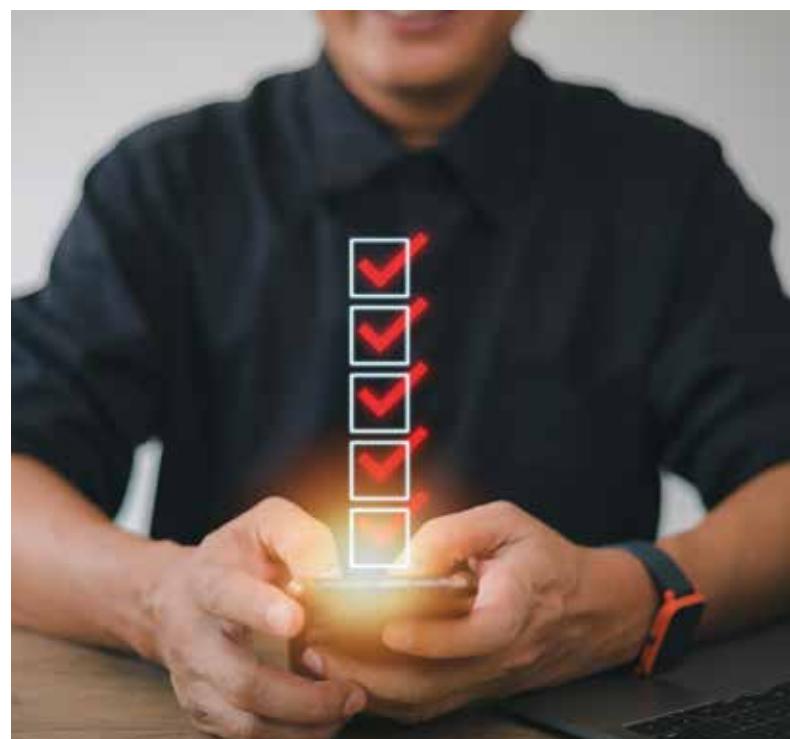
## 5 Draw up checklists

When your mind is calmer, you are more likely to remember what you need to do or provide on the day. Have a notebook handy and record anything you can think of. Then, when it's close to examination time, draw up and print out the checklists you'll need to prepare beforehand and do on the day.

### Put up the checklists where you will see them.

- Paste one in your study file.
- Put one up on your cupboard wall.
- Use one as a screensaver.
- Place one on your fridge.
- Save a copy on your phone.

*See the checklist that you can print/copy and use at the end of this guide.*



## Prepare beforehand

- Have spares of everything. Then have a spare of a spare. The last thing you want, is for your pen to run out of ink or your calculator battery to fail.
- Have a see-through pencil bag or use a plastic Ziploc bag. Some venues expect all your equipment to be transparent.
- Create a full set of stationery. Replace any missing pieces when you get home.
- If it is the first time you are writing this examination, ask your lecturer for list of what you should have with you in the examinations.
- Find out the rules for the examination venue beforehand. Keep a copy to read on the day.
- Know where, when and what. If your examination isn't in your regular classroom at the regular time, confirm in advance where and when it will be, and what time you need to be seated.
- Pack the night before.

## 6 Reinforce your knowledge

The day before the examination is not the time to start learning new work. This is the time to revise and focus on problem areas.

### Quizzes

Regularly test yourself on the material using quizzes or practice problems. Actively recalling information strengthens memory and aids retention.

Textbooks usually have revision quizzes at the end of each chapter, but it is unlikely that you will get the same questions in a test. Instead, create your own quizzes that cover all the content.

### Past examination papers

Reviewing past examinations or assignments can help identify areas of weakness and guide your study focus. Most curriculums have associated past paper websites. Here are a few website links:

- **South African CAPS past papers for Grades 10 to 12**  
[https://www.education.gov.za/Curriculum/NationalSeniorCertificate\(NSC\)Examinations/NSCPastExaminationpapers.aspx](https://www.education.gov.za/Curriculum/NationalSeniorCertificate(NSC)Examinations/NSCPastExaminationpapers.aspx)
- **TVET Colleges past papers**  
<https://www.tvetpapers.co.za/>
- **IEB past papers**  
<https://www.ieb.co.za/pages/pastiebpaperslibrary>  
<https://www.sapapers.co.za/ieb>

### REFERENCE

Refer to **THE LITTLE GUIDE TO MAXIMISING KNOWLEDGE POTENTIAL** for more information on how to create your own quizzes and mock exam papers.



## How to best use past papers

- 1 Practise a past paper **at least one per subject per week**. This will help you identify weak points in your studies and help with content recall.
- 2 Make sure you have covered all the content relating to the paper you are practising.
- 3 Work through the first paper without worrying about time limits. Try to answer all the questions. Use your textbook to help you where you get stuck. The point is to find the answers to every question as best you can.
- 4 Once **all** questions are answered, mark your work. Insert and highlight any points you may have missed. Set aside the work.
- 5 At your next study session, redo the question paper. This time, try to stick to the time limits given in the paper. Do not use your textbook to help you answer.
- 6 Mark your work. Highlight the sections where you are struggling. Are these highlights the same as before? If yes, focus on this section. Make a note of these areas and focus on them during your revision closer to the examinations.
- 7 Try to practise with as many past papers as possible. Go back at least five years to make sure you cover all possible formats of questions.

## 7 Check in with your peers



### STUDY BUDDIES

These exam period friendships often last beyond exams and into the classroom, which is the best study support group to have.

It helps to keep tabs on what your classmates are doing. Try talking to the top performers in the class or subject. They might remember more than you did from class or have researched relevant information that you didn't know about.

- Keep your study group active throughout. They will help you study, can check your work and be your support when you feel you are faltering (see the morning of the examination for how this support group really works).
- Compare schedules and see how much time others have allocated to certain subjects.
- Exchange info packs and make copies of pages you don't have.

## 8 Don't be a crash test dummy

Cramming the day before examinations is not the best method of studying. It causes stress, makes it difficult to retain knowledge and without revision you may not remember a lot of what you learnt the day before.

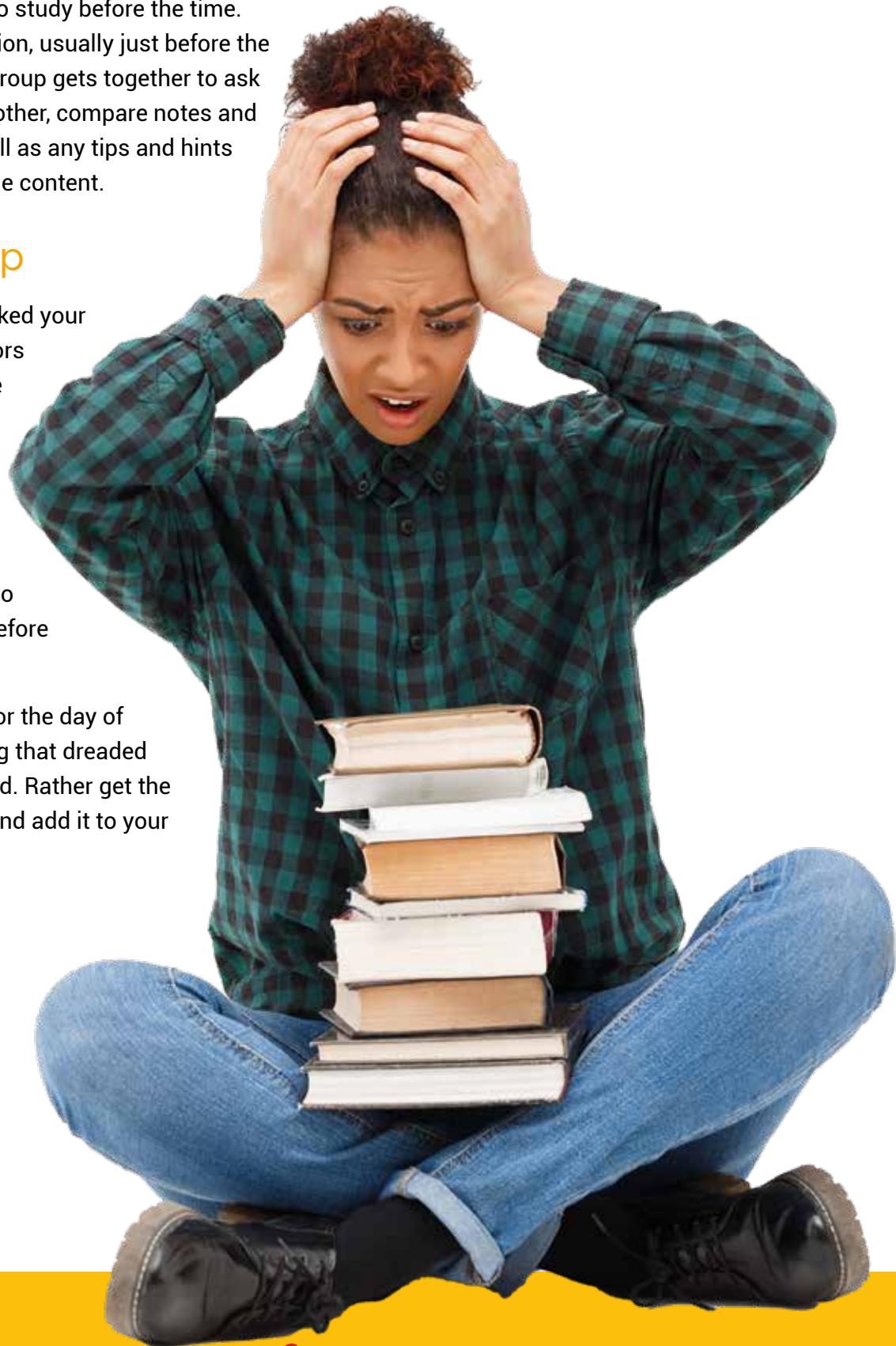
However, a crash course session may work when you don't have access to regular study groups or have not been able to study before the time.

This is a once-off session, usually just before the examination, where a group gets together to ask questions, quiz one another, compare notes and share flashcards as well as any tips and hints on how to remember the content.

## 9 Ask for help

Make sure you have asked your teachers, lecturers, tutors or study buddies all the questions that you are stumped with. They will not be available on the morning of the examination, except by prior arrangement, so get your act together before the time.

Don't stress and wait for the day of the examination, hoping that dreaded question won't be asked. Rather get the information you need and add it to your info pack to revise.



# B. Managing your stress

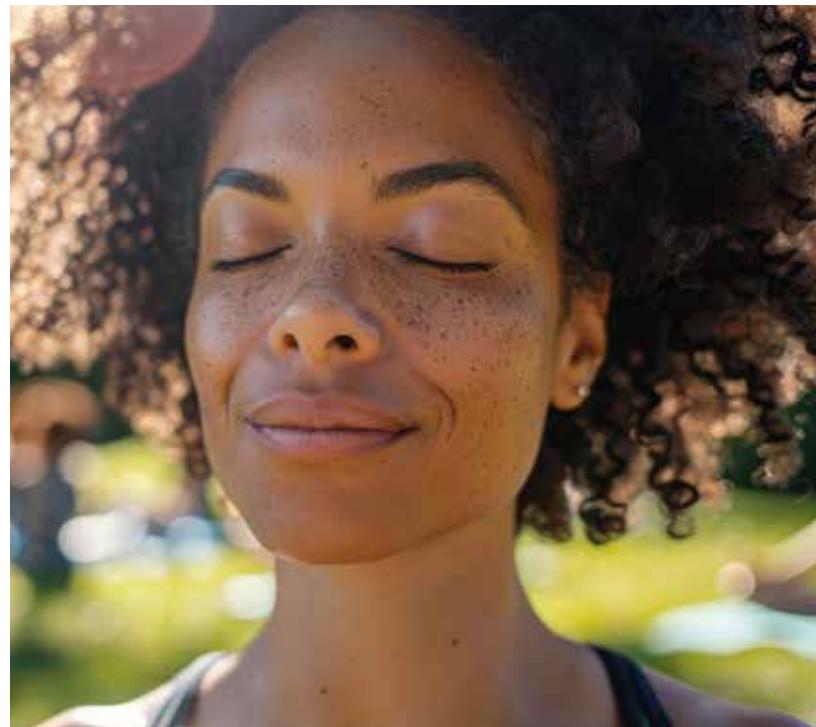
Different people manage stress in different ways. Learn a calming technique that works for you for while you write. It might be different to the calming technique you use when you study. This is fine – as long as your technique works and doesn't bother others in the examination venue.

## 1 Just breathe

Controlling your breathing is one of the quickest and easiest techniques to relieve tension in the body and calm the mind.

When you take deep, slow breaths, the body undergoes a relaxation response: your heart rate slows, your muscles relax and your blood pressure drops.

Set aside time to practise your breathing every day. This way when it comes to examination time the breathing comes naturally.



<b>Pursed-lip breathing</b>	This forces you to focus on your breathing as you force the air out of pursed lips. Inhale through your nose for two counts, then push the air out of your lips (as if you are about to whistle) for four counts.
<b>Square breathing</b>	Breathe in for four counts, hold for four counts, breathe out for four counts and relax for four counts.
<b>Extend your exhale</b>	Exhale the air for a longer count than you breathe in. For example, breathe in for four counts and exhale for six counts.
<b>Use the 3-3-3 rule</b>	Breathe in for three counts, hold for three counts and exhale for three counts. This is a quick and easy way to bring your anxiety levels down.

### TEN BREATHING EXERCISES TO MANAGE STRESS

Follow this link for more detailed breathing techniques that you can use in any situation.

Try them all and find the one that works best for you.

<https://www.healthline.com/health/breathing-exercise>

## 2 Make scents of it all

- Apply some perfume, essential oil, body spray or scented lotion while you study. Then apply the same scent just before taking the test or examination. The scent will trigger the memory your brain stored while you were studying.
- Use a scent that doesn't bring up any other associations.
- Calming scents such as lavender, rosemary, peppermint, citrus, basil and eucalyptus are known to enhance focus and memory and help you to relax during the examination.
- A lava bead bracelet can be worn under your sleeve. Add a few drops to the porous beads before studying. It retains the scent for hours, even days. You can hold your wrist close to your face while you write to get the full benefit.



### *Does scenting work?*

Scenting can be quite successful for those who respond well to smell stimulation. Smelling certain scents during your studies allows your brain to link what you are reading with what you are smelling. So, when you smell the same scent again you should be able to recall what you studied when you last smelt that scent.

This may only work for two subjects maximum at a time. Some students use a different scent for each subject, while others are put into the study state of mind by a single scent.

## 3 Use a stress buster

- Some people are very tactile. If they play with a pencil grip while studying, it may help them recall information during examinations.
- Some use scented playdough or stress balls while studying to keep their hands busy.
- Others have found putting an elastic band around their wrist and then snapping it to keep them focused works well. Just ensure that your snapping noise doesn't annoy other students during the exam.





## 4 Get enough rest

- Prioritise sleep and get enough each night. A lack of sleep causes mental fatigue and affects your memory.
- Take walks outside where you simply be. No thoughts, no talking, just a total reset of the body.
- Listen to music with no lyrics. Play different music to help you disconnect and sleep.
- Take breaks regularly.

## 5 Follow a healthy diet

- Maintain a balanced diet.
- Eat brain-boosting foods such as berries, citrus fruits, dark chocolate, nuts, eggs, avocados, salmon, olive oil, beets, rosemary, bone broth and turmeric. These will enhance your memory, focus and concentration.
- Avoid sugars to prevent that sugar crash.
- Limit medication that stimulates your adrenaline – adrenal fatigue before examinations can be very harmful.



## 6 Exercise regularly

- Maintain a regular exercise routine. Even walking or stretching for 20 minutes each day will help.
- The best exercise is outdoors, where you breathe in fresh air and benefit from the healing properties of nature. Add taking a dog for a walk and you get double points in feeling good!



## 7 Try natural remedies

- There are many natural remedies, herbal or homeopathic, that can help with focus, clarity, memory and examination anxiety. Talk to your healthcare practitioner, pharmacist or health shop assistant for the formula that best suits your needs.
- Examination water has quite a good track record during examination sessions. Not only does it keep you hydrated, but it also calms the mind and helps it focus on the tasks at hand. Premake the bottles for a week's supply, and then sip it through the entire examination series.

*See the recipe for exam water at the end of this guide.*

# C. The day before

The day before an examination is the day, you consolidate all your work for that subject.

## 1 Focus on weaknesses, refresh your strengths

- This day is for revision only. Work through your self-made test papers. Focus on the questions you got wrong and make sure you understand the work.
- Memorise the mnemonics, rhymes, diagrams and any other recall techniques that you used during your study prep.
- Refresh the content that you are confident in. You know these are the marks you are guaranteed if you get these questions.
- Attend any study groups organised by the school/college or by fellow classmates. If you have several to choose from, opt for the groups led by the top performers. They are likely to be more organised and have better resources to share.

## 2 Update your info pack

Go through your info pack and cover the notes you made.

Use the info pack on the morning of the examination. The pack should also include the things you can test on your classmates – tips and tricks to get those extra marks. It beats paging through both the textbook and the class workbook. The info packs make everything clear and concise.

## 3 Check your checklists

This is the crucial checklist, the one that confirms you are ready and prepares you for the exam.

- Plug in all your devices overnight so that they are fully charged for the examinations.
- Write your examination number, venue number and ID number on stickers and paste them on your pencil case, examination bag and cell phone cover.
- Get 20 minutes' exercise to clear your mind and get oxygen into your muscles. This will also help you get a good night's sleep.
- Set your alarms. Yes, more than one alarm. Set them at 15-minute intervals so that if you sleep through one, the next one will wake you.
- Eat a healthy supper. Avoid any foods that will cause you discomfort during the night or in the examination venue the next day.
- Prepare clean drinking water, examination water or an energy-boosting drink for the exam.
- Pack your examination bag.

*See the printable checklists at the end of this guide.*

## 4 What if you cannot write the examination?

Things happen. Life is not always within our control. You may have a personal matter, or be ill, or be involved in an accident. You may be suffering from mental health issues. Whatever it is, help is available. The key is communicating this to your lecturer and college **before** the examination.

### LECTURERS ARE REASONABLE

A lecturer's primary goal is student success. They don't want to fail anyone and are reasonable as long as your excuse is valid and you give advance notice.

- First prize is always to try and write the examination. You are prepared and in the zone.
- However, if you fall ill or are involved in an accident, either beforehand or at the venue, you must notify the academic department and/or your lecturer immediately.
- Ask if you can make up the examination. Lecturers need to submit final grades within a week or two of the final examinations, so there is still time to make up the examination within a day or two of the scheduled one. You don't want an incomplete on your semester mark.
- Almost all schools and colleges require a doctor's certificate if you miss an examination. Many colleges and universities have their own health clinics that you should report to. If you are sick the day before (or even earlier), make an appointment to get treatment and a doctor's certificate.
- If you are travelling with a sports team or club on the day of the examination, get your coach to write a motivation letter for your lecturer as soon as possible. You may be able to take the examination in advance or reschedule it for when you return. If there are enough students writing on your team, they may even proctor the examination while you are travelling.



# D. The day of the examination

Today is the day. You are prepared, you have covered all your work and you are ready to take the examination. Trust yourself and your abilities. Focus on the positive outcomes only.

## 1 Have a healthy breakfast

- Your brain needs fuel to work. If you cannot eat a meal, have a smoothie, a meal supplement or an energy bar. Avoid sugar or you will crash during the examinations.
- Take vitamins and mineral supplements to boost your energy, focus your memory, and give clarity to your mind.
- Avoid refined sugar, high carb foods and fizzy drinks. This will give you temporary energy but halfway through the examination you may have a sugar crash and then all you want to do is sleep – not good for examinations!



## 2 Check one more time

### CHECK YOURSELF

Ask your invigilator if you may take extras like stress busters, throat lozenges or water bottles into the examination venue.

- Have a simpler checklist for the morning. These are just reminders to pack in the things you may have used during the night
- Read the rules for the examination venue and make sure you comply.
- Use a separate bag for examinations, other than your school bag. Store your study books in your school bag, along with notes. Your examination bag is focused on what you need for examinations only.
- If you are worried about the safety of your bag, have one with a single zip that can be sealed with a lock or cable ties.
- Take a healthy snack for after the examinations. You may not want to eat on the morning because of nerves, but once you have nailed that paper, your appetite will come back.
- Take stress busters, something that you can use to redirect your anxious mind.
- A packet of throat lozenges or mints will suppress any coughs and keep your throat lubricated, but nothing that makes a noise when you open it in the venue while you write.

- If you wear a Smart watch, you may not be allowed to take it into the venue. Ask your lecturer or invigilator. Make arrangements to wear a simple wrist watch that will help you keep track of time in the examinations.
- Take cash or your bank card as well as your bus card, and make sure your phone has enough airtime to call for transport after the examinations.
- Search your bags, your pockets, your pencil case and even your cell phone casing for any notes or doodles. Even the most innocent shopping list can get you into trouble.
- Don't take valuables to school that you are not allowed to take into the venue.

*See the printable checklists at the end of this guide.*

### 3 Go in early

#### WIN-WIN SITUATION

Often, this strategy helps students see a problem from a different perspective or they discover info that they missed before. It also helps retain information if you explain it to someone else.

- Get to the venue early, if possible. Arrange to meet your study group or other classmates and 'crash course' one another. This is when you try to catch the others out on questions they may not know. This gets the brain stems firing, gets your mind 'into the zone', and you may even learn something new!
- Pacing or walking helps some students focus better. Walk around the grounds if possible – the fresh air recharges a stale mind and there are no classroom distractions. Discuss struggle points and quiz one another. Use your info packs.
- Avoid others who are anxious. Anxiety is contagious. And don't discuss how anxious you are with your classmates. Break the cycle with positive thoughts and surround yourself with supportive influences. If you are feeling overwhelmed, call a friend or someone you know who can lighten your mood (preferably someone who isn't writing on the same day).
- Go to the bathroom about 10 minutes before you need to report to the venue. Then only sip lightly on your water during examinations.

### 4 Be at the exam room before the time

- Be at the examination room at least 30 minutes before the time. There may be announcements or instructions you need to hear so as not to break any rules.
- Follow the rules in the examination venue. If no bags are allowed inside the venue, ask if the bags will be constantly monitored.
- If bags are not monitored, ask the invigilator to keep your cell phone on their desk while you write, as well as any other valuables you don't want to leave unattended.



# E. During the examination

## 1 Set up your writing space

- Take in only what you need for the examination. Keep this all in one bag.
- For your stationery, only take out one of each item (pencil, eraser, sharpener, ruler, highlighter, pen) and keep the spares in the bag. If one item falls on the floor, do not chase after it. Instead, take out a replacement.
- Set up water, lozenges and stress busters in clear sight.
- Have a clear space to receive the paper. Don't clutter your writing space – a cluttered space creates a cluttered mind.

## 2 Read through the paper before you begin

- Once you receive your test, read through it. First read the instructions. Count the pages and make sure they agree with the number given on the cover page.
- Note the total marks for each section. Note how long the paper is (in minutes). Use this to allocate your time per section in minutes.



## EXAMPLE

Say the paper is two hours long. There are three sections: Section A is 20 marks, Section B is 30 marks and Section C is 50 marks. This means you have 120 minutes to earn 100 marks. This gives you a little over a minute per mark. Section A should take 25 minutes, Section B should take 35 minutes and Section C should take 60 minutes. (See the example on page 21.)

- Scan the types and content of questions in each section. Mark the easier sections and the ones where you are not that confident with the answers.
- Check for sections where you need to choose questions. Mark the obvious choices first. You can choose any other options once you've answered the easier questions.
- Start with the easiest section and move on to the most difficult. Sometimes the content of questions in the easier section can help when you get to more difficult questions.

## COMMAND VERBS

Most questions have command verbs that you need to pay attention to. These are the words or phrases that tell you how to answer the question. Highlight these words as you read the question to remind you of what you need to do.

*There is a list of command words at the end of this guide.*

## 3 Ask questions for clarity

Don't be afraid to ask if you are not sure how to respond, or if you think there may be an error in the paper.

If you see something in the directions, or a particular question that makes you unsure of what to do, raise your hand to ask your instructor or invigilator for clarification.

## 4 Relax

- Before you rush into answering the questions, take a moment to calm yourself. Take a deep breath and release it slowly. Use the breathing exercises in this guide.
- Don't start thinking about what you didn't do, or how unprepared you are. There's no point and it's too late. You did the work. This is your chance to show how much you know.
- Focus on what you can control at this moment. Remember that the results do not define your abilities. This is only a performance on a certain day: good or bad.

## 5 Focus on what you write

- Once you begin, stay focused on your work.
- Don't worry about what others around you are doing or how fast they are writing.
- Stick to your time allocations and don't spend too much time on a particular question. A later question may remind you of how to answer a question you got stuck on earlier.
- Avoid feeling negative if you don't know an answer. If your mind goes blank, go on to another question or another part of the test. Mark that question with an asterisk so you can quickly spot which questions to come back to later. **Work at a pace of a mark a minute.**
- Start each question on a new page. Clearly number and underline the question number. This way, if you don't write your answers in number order, you can still arrange your answers in the correct order at the end.
- If you are writing an essay, first make quick notes on anything you can recall. Write down any mnemonics, anagrams or other learning techniques. This will stimulate your memory and get your mind working. It also helps you plan the essay and remember important points.

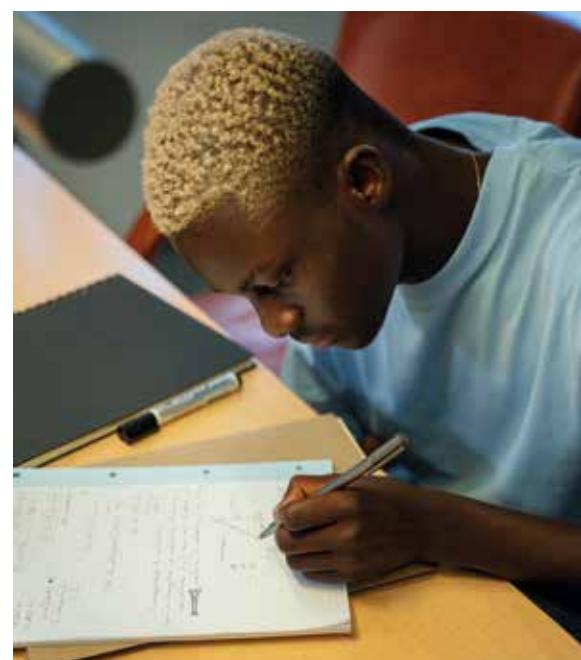
### EXAMPLE

A Business Studies paper may have three sections: short questions, long questions and the essay.

- First tackle the short questions – they are usually the easiest.
- Then tackle the essay as this is usually half of the total mark of the paper. Marks are usually allocated for layout, which is an easy earn.
- Finally, do the long questions. These are usually the hardest and the least likely to produce high marks.

A bonus is that, once you complete the essay, your mind is usually in full business stride so you have a higher chance of answering some of the long questions.

- Don't go back to a question and rewrite it if you have already answered it. Trust your reply. Only change something if you suddenly remember the correct answer, possibly triggered by something else you read later in the paper.



## 6 Deal with moments of anxiety



If you do start to panic, take a drink of water or take a breathing break. Put down your pen or pencil, close your eyes and do a breathing exercise.

- Try tensing and releasing your muscles.
- Yawn to get oxygen into your brain and body.
- Open your mouth wide to stretch your jaw muscles if you've been clenching.
- Pull your shoulders up to your ears and then drop them down firmly.
- Put each hand on the opposite shoulder and hug yourself. This will get rid of tension in your upper back.

## 7 Use remaining time wisely

If you finish the paper, read through it one more time and check the following:

- Did you answer all the questions?
- Is your grammar and punctuation correct so that there is no confusion in your answer?
- Are all your answers numbered correctly to match the question paper?
- Are the answer pages in the correct number order?
- Are your name/student number and other details on the cover of the answer sheet?
- Are all your pages stapled together?



# F. After the examination

## 1 Rest and recover

- Get sleep immediately if you pulled an all-nighter the night before. You may feel energised after the adrenaline of the examinations, but your body and brain need to recharge before the next examination.
- Drink lots of fluids to rehydrate. You probably only took short sips during the examinations to avoid having to use the bathroom.
- If you need to do an 'autopsy' on the paper, remember that the paper is done. And while you and your classmates may compare answers and despair or celebrate how you wrote, you won't know until you actually get your results, so don't dwell on it too much.

## 2 Check your answer papers

- If you were allowed to keep the question paper after the examination, bring it to class when you go over the answers. Otherwise ask the lecturer for a copy so that you can check how questions were phrased and how you might have misunderstood something.
- Make notes of all the areas where you lost marks and why. Add these notes to your info file to focus on before the next examination.
- If you disagree with a lost mark, check with the lecturer. It may be incorrectly marked, or it may be that you don't understand the topic. Either way, you will gain by raising the question.
- If there is time, check the marking allocations. Make sure ticks reflect the marks of the question. Add up the ticks per section and the section marks in total. No one is perfect – errors can be made – and this way you are secure in the knowledge that your final mark is correct.
- If you are not allowed to keep the papers, ask if you may take photographs for your own studies or make as many notes as you can for future reference.



# G. Resources

# 1 Checklists

# Stationery list

## Task list the evening before an exam

✓	Checklist
	Set your alarm.
	Pack your exam bag.
	Charge your devices (laptop, tablet, cell phone).
	Check your airtime/data.
	Arrange for an early study session.
	Confirm transport arrangements.
	Pre-make a snack and/or breakfast.
	Do some light exercise – breathing, yoga, walking, gym.
	Stay hydrated – drink lots of water.
	Get at least 6 hours' sleep.
	Have clothes and shoes ready to wear.



## In your exam bag

✓	Item
	Laptop/tablet
	Laptop charger
	Cell phone
	Cell phone charger or power pack
	Stationery bag (see separate list)
	Spectacles
	Watch (not a smart watch) or travel clock
	Airtime
	Cash or debit card
	Bus card
	Exam venue room number and address
	Exam venue rules
	Student number and card
	Venue code/exam registration
	ID card/number
	Info pack
	Study aids (flashcards, etc.)
	Throat lozenges or sweets
	Water bottle/exam water/energy-boosting drink
	Healthy snack
	Medication (if any)
	Stress buster (scent, pencil grip, etc.)

## Important contact numbers

Role	Name	Cell/email
Lecturer		
Medical centre		
Transport		
Study group		

# Command verbs/words

## Some of the more commonly used words

**Analyse** You may be given a poster or advert in the examination. You need to take a closer look at the information given. First break it down into smaller parts. Then examine each part carefully. Once you have done, there are usually follow-up questions based on the analysis you've done.

**Assess** In a comprehension question, you are given a flood of information that you need to sift through. When you assess a text extract, you need to form your own judgement on the content and then use this judgement to answer the questions in the best possible way.

**Compare** You now have a second poster in your paper. You are asked to compare this to the first poster. You need to find similarities and differences in their appearance, format, layout, content and the implicit message each one conveys.

**Contrast** This is very similar to compare, but instead of comparing all aspects, you focus on only the differences.

**Define** You need to give meaning to a word, term or concept. In many subjects, you will need to memorise definitions so that you use the correct words in your answer. This is where your memory retention techniques are very useful, such as flashcards or mnemonics.

**Describe** You need to pay attention to detail here. Point out important details and characteristics of what you have to describe. For an object, look at its shape, colour, purpose and properties. For a concept, look at its meaning, use and how to recognise it.

**Discuss** This is often used when you need to explain the points of something in detail. This is when you give as much information as possible, keeping in mind how many marks are allocated to that question. For example, don't write a one-page essay for a three-mark question.

**Evaluate** This is similar to assessing, but you use your information to decide on the value or impact it will have on the selected audience.

**Examine** Inspect the content closely. It is similar to analysing, where you need to break down the information to be able to answer the question that follows.

**Explain** Stick to the facts and then justify your opinions by giving reasons for your answers. You can also explain how you reached a certain conclusion. The aim is to show that you understand the given information.

**Identify** You need to sift through the information and pick out what is relevant to your answer. Unless you are asked to describe as well, you don't have to go into much detail.

**Outline** Only mention the important facts, i.e. the headlines. This usually follows identifying certain information. It is the opposite of detail – you narrow down the key points.

**Predict** Give an assumption on a possible outcome or effect. Always support your answer with reasons to show you have a good understanding of the topic.

**Summarise** You would have summarised throughout your schooling career. Identify the key points. Stick to a few short sentences that carry the gist of the information given.



## Exam water recipe



CREATED BY NATURA ([www.natura.co.za](http://www.natura.co.za))

500 ml water

10 tablets tissue salts no. 6 (crushed)

10 ml/2 tsp Stressless tonic\*

60 drops Rescue Remedy

60 drops Cerbo

*Drink slowly during the day*

*... sip, sip, sip!*

\*Stressless tonic is hard to find –  
Nervuton has the same ingredients,  
so you can substitute 50 drops  
of that, if necessary.

