



# EXAM TECHNIQUE

by Lee Parker  
Occupational Therapist

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# PREPARE LIKE AN ATHLETE

## Know your timings

Athletes prepare as much as possible before big events. They don't just prepare themselves but they prepare everything. They check their equipment, they check the ground, pitch or race and they check out their opponents. They basically leave as little to chance as they possibly can so that they can focus on their performance.

Students can do this too. One way is to be very clear about your timings before you go into an exam.



### Top Tip

Prepare for that **particular exam** on that **particular day** at that **particular time**. The day before think about when it starts and ends, how many sections and marks there will be and what your timings will be for the different sections. In the exam check if these timings work, adjust if needed and write them onto the question paper. Now you have a road map to keep you on time while you do the exam.

# EXAM TECHNIQUE

Make life easy in the exam. Separate out the different jobs that you have to do and help your brain to work quicker and easier.

The different jobs are:

Deciding stuff

Remembering stuff

Writing stuff





# DECIDE STUFF

## Take a few minutes at the beginning

(Note: Some exams are multiple-choice or mathematics and this doesn't apply.)

Read through the exam questions. Check the back for extra questions! Write down your timings for the different sections. Choose the order that you want to answer questions in and start with your best answers first!

Deciding stuff takes a few minutes but will save you time over the whole exam and get you more marks. Include these few decision-making minutes when you are estimating how long each section of the exam will take you.



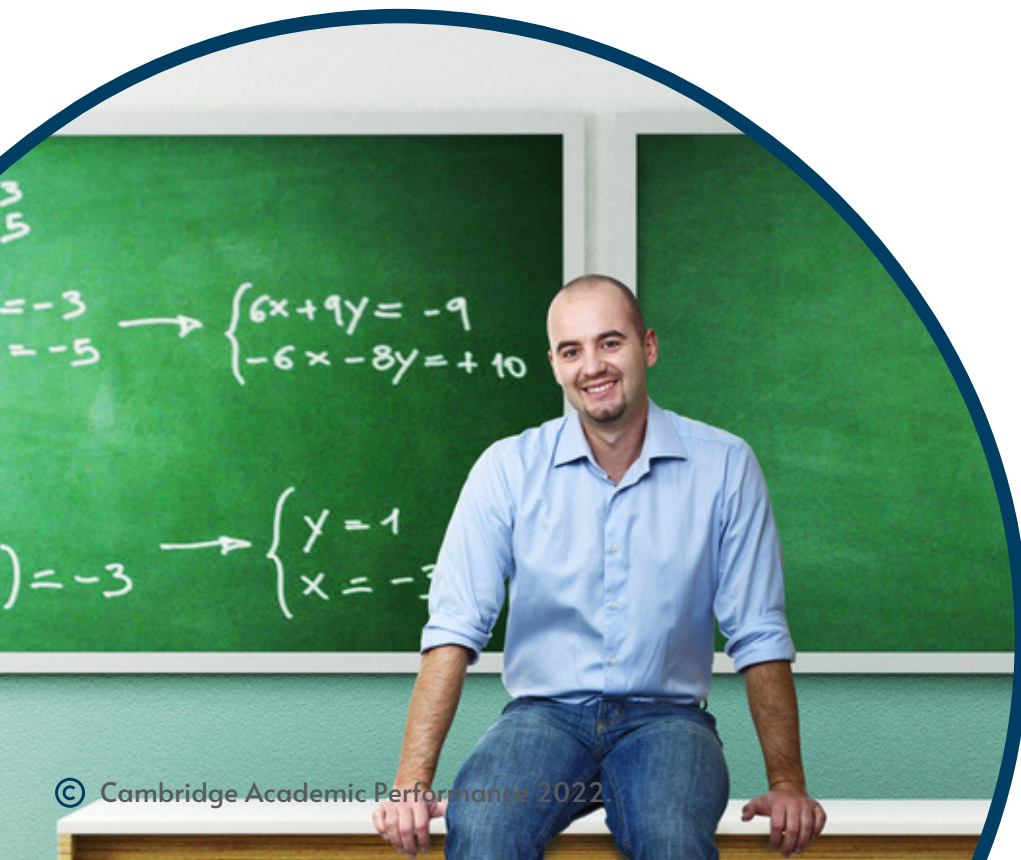
# REMEMBER STUFF

## Use summaries for longer answers

When you have a longer answer it can be more effective to split up the jobs of remembering and writing.

Putting a quick mind map or summary down helps you to remember information that is specific to that exam question. You don't have to focus on writing, just on remembering information that answers that particular question.

If you run out of time and need to leave your answer unfinished and move on, you can be marked from your summary because it shows that you had the knowledge.



Remember teachers and examiners actually want to give you marks. It's very frustrating for them if they can see how close you came to getting marks but didn't. They want to help you!

# WRITING STUFF

## Keep moving

Having a summary means that you will write better and quicker. You already know the facts that you want to mention and the direction your answer will take. The summary forces you to check whether you are answering the actual question and this means you will start getting marks quicker because you've already planned your answer. This saves time and delivers higher marks.

If you remember a new fact while you are writing, don't trust yourself to keep it in your mind, write it onto your summary immediately and then keep writing. We've all had the experience of having a good idea in an exam and then forgetting it two sentences later. Exams can bring out new ideas and connections - write them down!



# THE POPCORN EFFECT

This highlights how our marks come in clusters when we are writing in an exam. It takes a few sentences to get into the answer, then we give lots of facts and get lots of marks quickly and as we finish the answer our marks tail off. Like popcorn when we cook it.

This means that if we are over-running on time it makes sense to leave a question and move on to the next. We will get more marks when we get into the middle of the next question than the few we would get from finishing the last. This might feel psychologically difficult but it is good strategy.

Knowing your timings and moving on is a high performance technique for getting the most marks in an exam.

# TOP TIPS

Take a few minutes to decide and plan at the beginning

Know you're timings and **MOVE ON** even if you haven't finished

Do your best questions first

Write a summary before longer answers



This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.