



Cardinal Newman Catholic High School



EXAMWISE

**A GUIDE TO TACKLING EXAM
PAPERS WITH CONFIDENCE!**

Final preparations



The night before:

- What time is exam? Phone a friend!
- Check equipment in plastic bag. Spares?
- No Alcohol!
- Get a good night's sleep and go to bed early
- Last minute read through notes



The morning of the exam

- Get up early and get organised
- Eat breakfast for energy
- Set off for school in plenty of time
- Relax – deep breathing exercises
- Check equipment
- Don't talk to others about the exam – you might panic yourself into thinking you haven't revised enough



The exam room

- Check equipment – if anything's missing ask the invigilator
- Clock – make sure you can see one and know what time the exam starts and finishes
- Get comfortable – if your desk is wobbly, pack it with a bit of paper. If there is a noise which is distracting you, inform the invigilator
- Positive thinking – “I am capable of doing very well in this exam

THE PAPER



The question paper is yours. Make full use of it

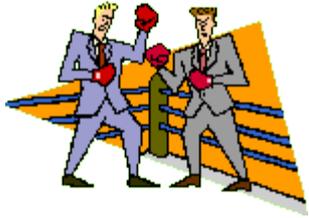
- Note down things that occur to you as you read through
- When you have a choice, mark which questions you intend to do
- Plan answers
- Underline key words in questions. What are you being asked to do?

A B A matter of wording!

- Compare – how are things similar or are there important differences. Which is best and why
- Contrast – look for differences
- Define – give the meaning
- Describe – write in detail
- Differentiate – explain the difference
- Discuss – write about the important aspects of the topic, are there two sides to the question? Consider the arguments for and against
- Distinguish – explain the difference

A B A matter of wording

- Evaluate – Judge the importance or success
- Explain – make clear
- Illustrate – give examples which make the point clear
- Interpret – explain the meaning in your own words Eg. You may be asked to interpret a graph
- Justify – give reasons to support an argument or action
- Outline – choose the most important aspects of a topic. Ignore the minor detail
- Relate – show the connection between things
- State – write briefly the main points
- Summarise – bring together the main points



TACKLING THE PAPER

- Plan your answer for essay questions to organise your thoughts. Note down the ideas you need to get across and list them in the order you would write them. Use your plan at every stage Eg every paragraph
- Stick to the point of the question and don't waffle
- With multiple choice questions, if you do not know the right answer, eliminate answers which are definitely wrong
- If you have time, re-read all your answers and make any necessary corrections

TACKLING THE PAPER

- Scan all the questions. Read them carefully. Make sure you know what is expected of you
- Note the number of marks for each section. More time is needed on questions which have the most marks. Do a time plan for each section of the exam. Keep to it! You may only be 3 minutes behind after first question but by Q5 you'll be 15 minutes behind. You'll get more marks for 5 reasonable answers than for 3 brilliant ones
- Decide on an order – best answers first even if they do not appear first on the paper

TACKLING THE PAPER

- If you find a question too difficult to answer, leave it out but **MARK IT CLEARLY**. Go back to it later- sometimes your thoughts are clearer towards the end of the examination
- Don't spend too long on any one question if they all carry equal marks. If total marks are 5 the examiner can't give you any more no matter how detailed your answer is!
- If you do find yourself running out of time and still have a question or two to do, plan an answer even if it's not in full as you'll still get some marks for your plan