



PREPARATION IS KEY TO SUCCESS IN UPCOMING MATHS EXAMINATION

As the Maths exams approach on **Wednesday 9th November and Monday 14th November**, the most important thing is to ensure you are fully prepared.

We asked Mr Thornely, Vice Principal and teacher of Maths, to provide some tips on how to prepare for the exams. Mr Thornely said; 'The best way to prepare for your maths exam is to know that you have tried your best and have dedicated the required time for independent revision. It's not enough to simply complete the homework that has been set; you need to have used the revision CD. Following the guidelines given in the revision plan, you need to have prepared and used revision notes and you need to have practised past papers, including using the VLE'.

'Use the time before the exam wisely. Read through your revision notes; test yourself on the facts and the methods used. To save any stress ensure that you

arrive at the academy early, having eaten breakfast and are fully equipped for the exam'.

'In the exam you need to ensure that you read all the questions carefully and highlight the key words; examiners often hide the maths in the question! Answer every question; it's worth having a guess. A blank definitely scores no marks! Finally show all your workings, over 50% of the marks are purely from the working!'

'Remember if you know that you have worked hard and are well prepared then you can enter the exam with confidence and secure the best grade possible'.

If you are worried specifically about the maths exam or would like extra tips and help to prepare there are a number of people to contact:

Mr Burns	Curriculum Area Leader
Mr Thornely	Vice Principal
Mrs Ali	Teacher of Maths
Mr Smart	Teacher of Maths
Mrs Ward	Curriculum Area Support

Can you answer the following maths questions?

- 1) Rakesh and Tina share out £40 in the ratio 5:3, in that order. How much do they get each?
- 2) A furniture company makes tables and chairs. Tables are sold for £120, and chairs for £40. An order comes in for 9 tables and 17 chairs. What is the total bill?
- 3) Work out $1,435 + 217$
- 4) What is a six-sided polygon called and what is the total of its interior angles?
- 5) Find the value of $3a + 2b$ when $a = 6$ and $b = 5$

Useful maths revision websites...

- <http://www.cimt.plymouth.ac.uk/projects/mep/default.htm>
- <http://www.mymaths.co.uk/>
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/maths/>
- <http://nrich.maths.org/public/>

Inside this edition:

Exam Language	Pg 2
Time to Study: Top Tips	Pg 2
Focus on Exams	Pg 3
Parents' Corner	Pg 4
A Guide to the VLE	Pg 4

EXAM LANGUAGE

It is important to understand key words used by examiners. Below are a selection of words and phrases which are often used on exam papers:

Account for	Explain the cause of
Analyse	Divide into parts and describe each part
Calculate	Numerical answer is needed
Comment on	Explain why something is important
Compare	Show similarities
Concise	Short and brief
Contrast	Show differences
Criticise	Use evidence to support your opinion about the views of others
Define	Give the meaning of
Describe	Write in detail
Differentiate	Explain the difference
Discuss	Give both sides of an argument and then give your opinion
Distinguish	Explain the difference
Evaluate	Judge the importance or success
Explain	Make clear, give details
Factors	The factors or circumstances that contribute to a result
An account of	Describe
Illustrate	Give both sides of an argument and then give your opinion
Indicate	Show and demonstrate
Interpret	Explain the meaning in your own words
Justify	Give reasons to support an argument
Outline	Choose the most important aspects of a topic ignoring the minor detail
Predict	Use given information or information you have found, to say what is likely to happen
Relate	Show the connection between things
Role	A function of something, what part something plays and how it works
State	Express in words
Suggest	Often refers to information which is not on the syllabus but you will have been given information in the question you can use
Summarise	Give the main points of a wide subject
Trace	Show how something has developed from beginning to end

TIME TO STUDY: TOP TIPS

Time is the most valuable resource any student has. It is also one of the most wasted. Developing a 'Study Plan' should guide you in how to allocate the available time in the most productive way, although we know that sticking to your plan can be tough. A large part of your success will depend upon **your** ability to manage **your** time effectively.

Don't be fooled into believing that no one else is studying. You should be concerned only about whether **you** are studying. Make a plan and do your best to stick to it. You may find it helpful to record what you have done in a diary each evening.

We asked Mr Middleton, Vice Principal, to outline some top tips for studying:

Where is the best place to study?

There are lots of places where you can study in school. Many departments run after-school and lunchtime sessions specifically to support Year 11 students with revision and study time. If you prefer to work independently the Learning Resource Centre is an ideal place to work. The important thing is that you find somewhere to study that is right for you and where you feel most comfortable.

Have you got any advice if I chose to study at home?

Find somewhere free from distractions. It is always best to study at a desk or a table, rather than on the bed or on the floor. Make sure you are prepared and have everything you need to study; pens, pencils, textbooks and paper. This might seem an obvious point to make but it is amazing how many students don't come to school with these basic things!

Are there any other tips you can give us for successful studying?

- Listening to loud music does not help you concentrate! Encouraging your brain to multi-task is not a good idea when studying.
- Planning work is not a waste of time, in fact, studies show that it increases your marks by at least one grade!
- Take regular, short breaks. Most people find they cannot study effectively for more than 45 minutes to an hour without a short break of around 10 minutes.

Parents! Did you know that ...

Students in Year 11 rarely have NO work to do. If no formal homework has been set it is expected that students read around the subject, take extra notes from textbooks or complete additional tasks. You can support your child by checking what they have to do every day and not accepting '*nothing*' as an answer.

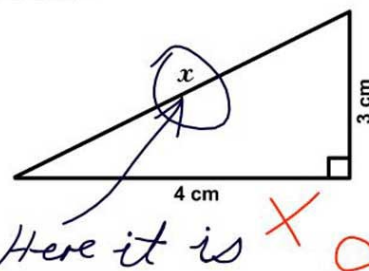
Parents! Did you know that ...

Your child may try to convince you that they have a lot of time to complete their revision ... they don't! If they only start revising two months before the exam and do 15 hours revision a week they will only have completed around 20 hours revision per subject (based on 6x GCSEs).

How not to answer
a maths question ...



3. Find x .



FOCUS ON: EXAMS

1. Read the instructions on the front of the paper.
2. Read the whole paper first, don't give in to temptation to jump straight in.
3. Don't worry if other people are writing before you, concentrate on yourself and what is best for you.
4. Take a couple of minutes to write down anything you think you may forget.
5. If you have a choice of questions, select the ones that you have most confidence of doing well. Check the mark scheme for the ones selected.
6. One common mistake is to put down all the information you know related to the topic in question. You must answer the question and so select information accordingly.
7. Answer the right number of questions; you do not have marks deducted for getting it wrong, so make a reasonable guess if you don't know.
8. Plan your time, make sure you give yourself enough time to answer the longer questions. Don't take up lots of time with questions that are only worth 3 marks and leave no time for those worth 10 or 15 marks.
9. Look at the mark scheme, more marks mean more information required from you.
10. Think about each question and look for the key words within it.
11. For essay questions, plan your answer, it will help you to stick to the point. You can cross it out later.
12. If you find yourself running out of time on longer answers, don't cross out the planning. The examiner may be able to give you some marks for the points you listed in it.
13. Use the exam paper. Underline key words in the questions, make notes in the margins.
14. Check your answers against the plan you made.
15. Read through your answers if you have time and make any corrections.
16. If your mind goes blank at any stage, don't panic. Turn your paper over and take three deep breaths. There will be some of the paper that you can do. Re-read it slowly and calmly.
17. Stay focussed. If your mind starts to wander, take one minute to complete the breathing exercise above. It will give you time to refocus.
18. Always stick to the point of the question.

Q: What is the process for separating a mixture of chalk and sand?

It is a process called filtration.

Q: What is the meaning of the term 'activation energy'?

It's what is needed to get you up in the morning.

How not to answer
science questions ...



Parents! Did you know that ...

If your child is studying a BTEC subject successful completion of this can guarantee them a qualification equivalent to an A*, A, B or C at GCSE! The best way to help your child to be successful in BTEC subjects is to encourage them to meet all the unit deadlines, to advise them to revisit passed work to upgrade it to a higher level and to encourage them to attend after-school catch-up/study sessions.

Parents' Corner

PARENTAL SUPPORT PLAYS A HUGE PART IN STUDENT SUCCESS

You can never underestimate the key role parents and carers play in the success their child achieves at the end of Year 11.

We recognise that our students will find their journey through Year 11 particularly stressful and that it is likely that you will share these feelings of stress and anxiety as you wish them well.

We want to help you to be able to provide the support your child needs at

this crucial time and there are a number of people at the academy whom you can contact with any questions or concerns you may have, or if you just want to talk in general terms about supporting your child:

- Mr Cliffe – Progress Manager: Y11
- Mrs Smith – Head of Year: 10/11
- Mr Middleton – Vice Principal
- Your child's Form Tutor
- Individual Subject Teachers
- Curriculum Area Leaders

A GUIDE TO USING THE VLE TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD

We asked Miss Marston, ICT Coordinator, to provide parents with an insight into how they can support their child by using the VLE.

What is the VLE and why does my child need to use it?

The VLE is our 'virtual learning environment'. It is a bit like an intranet and can only be accessed by students, teachers and parents so it's completely safe. The VLE is a place where students can log in and find resources, get help with coursework, and information about exams and courses. The best thing about the VLE is that students can access it at any time, when they are on holiday, at weekends and even if the school has to close due to bad weather, all you need is an internet connection.

How do I access the VLE and support my child to use it?

- 1) Log on to www.itslearning.com.
- 2) In the top drop-down menu find 'Sheffield Academy'
- 3) In the user name box type 'Y11PARENT'
- 4) Enter the password 'Y11PARENT'

When you have logged on successfully, click on the 'courses' tab along the top of the screen, this will show you all the different courses available to year 11 (please remember that your child will not need all these courses as they won't be taking all the subjects).

What if I don't have internet access at home?

All students are welcome to use the computers in school at lunch time or they can choose to attend an after school session held in the ICT Department.

Is there anything else I need to know?

Not really! It's just a case of logging on and taking advantage of all the fabulous resources available, however, if you would like any help or support with accessing the VLE please don't hesitate to contact me.



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