



HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD DURING EXAMS: TIPS TO READ WITH THEM

Performing on the Day

- **Get a good night's sleep**
While the temptation is to stay up half the night 'cramming' in more facts and figures, the evidence suggests this approach is counter-productive. In the context of a two-year course, an extra night's studying can make very little difference to your knowledge. However, having a mind that is refreshed, alert, and ready to respond to circumstances will obviously be of far greater benefit.
- **Arrive in plenty of time:** To perform well on the day, you need to be relaxed and to feel in control. This is difficult to achieve if you have missed breakfast and are stuck on a bus in traffic or standing on a train for 45 minutes as the exam time approaches. You will need about 15 minutes 'quiet time' to mentally rehearse your exam and run through your 'game plan' for the final time.
- **Have your equipment ready**
Each exam has its own requirements. Apart from properly functioning pens, pencils, rulers, etc, you may need a calculator for the Maths or Science exam. Drawing pencils may be required for diagrams in some subjects. A lot of nervous energy can be wasted if these items aren't checked in advance.
- **Think positive**
On the day of the exam, remind yourself of the good things (the material you know well, the revision you have completed, all the past exam questions done) rather than dwelling on areas of weakness. Having that self-belief will give you the confidence to trust your judgement within the exam hall and 'hit the target'.
- **Maintain your focus**
There can be a lot of tension, drama, and hysteria in the air on the days of an exam. You want to keep the balance between maintaining your focus and interacting normally with your friends and classmates. Try finding a quiet spot to 'warm-up' before each exam. Surround yourself with people who are likely to add to the calm rather than add to the clamour.

Dealing With Distractions

- **"I just start daydreaming":** Become an active learner. Always work with a pen and paper. Focus on a specific task, not a specified time for your study.
- **"I can't focus because I'm anxious":** Try to limit yourself to your immediate concerns, the things you have some control over (preparation for the upcoming revision test) rather than the things you cannot determine (like what might be)
- **"I often fall asleep when I'm supposed to be studying":** Try to get to bed on time over the coming weeks. A tired brain is very unproductive. Get some genuine rest at the weekend. Be sure to get regular exercise, even just a walk around the block at night to clear your head.
- **"I'm constantly interrupted by other people":** Study in the location most likely to offer peace and quiet. Ask for consideration from family members over the final run up to exams. Never have a TV, phone, computer game, or music system within arm's reach while you are working.
- **"I keep thinking of other things while I'm studying":** Divide the study session into smaller sessions which demand your full attention e.g. vocabulary or poetry test. Keep a 'reminder pad' beside you, a little notebook to jot down something that strikes you (someone to call, a job to do, etc.) and deal with it after the study period. Having made a note of it, you can more easily re-focus on your work.