

STUDY SMART NEWSLETTER

**DECEMBER 9, 2022,
FIRST NEWSLETTER**

INTRODUCTION TO OUR PROJECT

Hello! We are Study Smart, and we're here to help you with your studying needs. Our newsletters will contain interviews with high-scoring Year 12s and 13s on how to pass your IGCSEs with high marks in various different subjects, helping to provide an in-depth student perspective on the course. The newsletter will also contain tried-and-tested studying tips to help students achieve higher grades, as well as key information on the exams to help give students a head start.

For more information or if you have any questions, please feel free to contact Eunice Wong (12D) at eunice.wong@online.island.edu.hk!

-INTERVIEW- CORE MATHEMATICS

This newsletter will focus on Maths, a subject all IGCSE students are required to take! We conducted an interview with Prem Patel (12R) and asked him questions about his journey in IGCSE Math. He achieved 196/200 marks (level 9) in math so he's reliable, don't worry :)

Below is our interview, hope it will help with your IGCSE Math revision!



-MATH INTERVIEW! (1/3)-

Q: WHEN DID YOU START TO STUDY FOR THE SUBJECT BEFORE THE FINAL EXAM IN MAY/JUNE?

I actually didn't take the exam in the May/June period. I took it in January since I was confident enough in my abilities and wanted to get it out of the way. But to answer the question I started studying for the first paper about 2-3 weeks before the exam but I would 100% not recommend this as I only did it because it was during my winter break and I was stuck at home because of covid. This gave me loads of free time to revise and study.



Q: WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE FOR STUDENTS STUDYING THIS SUBJECT?

My number one piece of advice when studying for this subject is past papers, I know it seems obvious and all but that's because it's so incredibly effective, they help you understand what to expect on the exam and also familiarise you with the format of the questions, they also help you find out what your strengths and weaknesses are for different concepts.

Another thing is starting early, the earlier you start the less stressed you'll be since your revision is more evenly divided over a larger period of time. For the students who really want to achieve a level 9 I would recommend creating a google sheet of every past paper you finish and then marking yourself and putting your score in, then once you feel you've done a sufficient amount of past papers you go back to the ones you did worst on and you learn the concepts that you didn't get marks on. For this I would recommend starting at latest 1 and a half months away from your exam.

One of the things I would recommend is not taking notes but instead having a smaller notebook with mathematical rules and formulas instead making it concise and easy to understand because in my opinion notes don't really get you anywhere in maths, it's more about how you apply your knowledge for different questions. One more thing I would make sure that people need to understand is that studying a lot doesn't necessarily make you smarter, it depends on how you study and how efficient you are when you study.

-MATH INTERVIEW! (2/3)-

Q: DID YOU USE ANY SPECIFIC WEBSITES OR RESOURCES WHEN STUDYING FOR THE EXAM?

For me personally, apart from the official Pearson Edexcel website for past papers and [physicsandmathstutor.com](https://www.physicsandmathstutor.com) I felt there wasn't any need for any other resources. Though sometimes I wouldn't know how to answer a type of question or didn't know how to do something I would watch [youtube videos](#) explaining the concept and the channel I would watch these videos on is called "[The Organic Chemistry Tutor](#)" I really like his videos since they start off with easy problems and he explains the way to them then progressively starts doing more and more difficult problems which both help you understand how and why it works.

Q: HOW DID YOU EFFECTIVELY MANAGE YOUR TIME BETWEEN STUDYING FOR THIS SUBJECT AND OTHER SUBJECTS?

For me since I did it in January it was fairly straightforward since that was the only exam I had for another 5 months, but in hindsight I don't think it's very difficult to manage your time since by the time you're within 6 months of your maths exam you will have learnt I'd say about 80-85% of the course. This gives you the ability to start doing past papers months in advance giving you an idea of what concepts you need to relearn or be able to do at a higher level.

Q: WHAT DID YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT THIS SUBJECT?

Honestly just because it made sense to me and the feeling of getting the correct answer after lots of lines of working out and calculations gives me a sense of accomplishment almost like relief.

Q: WHAT DID YOU FIND MOST CHALLENGING ABOUT THIS SUBJECT?

For me personally I found the probability and geometry side of this course hard since I always found simple calculations and arithmetic easier as I am a very systematic thinker in my opinion



-MATH INTERVIEW! (3/3)-

Q: WOULD YOU CONSIDER THIS SUBJECT TO BE EASIER OR MORE DIFFICULT?

I would say it depends on the way you study. If you use the wrong methods or don't spend some time after class reviewing what you learnt in class then you will almost definitely fall behind. But if you know how to study well and efficiently then you should find this pretty easy.

Q: ARE YOU TAKING HL MATH IN IB?

Yes, I'm taking Higher Level Maths Analytics and Approaches which is the hardest maths course available. This is because it opens me up to very many job opportunities and career paths. Even if I don't end up following it through I like the ability to always have the option to follow said career paths.

Q: WHAT IS YOUR GO-TO STUDY METHOD FOR THIS SUBJECT? (E.G. POMODORO)

I would make sure I had no distractions around me like putting my phone on silent and turning off my laptop, then I would sit down and start a 2 hour timer to do a past paper. Once the timer went off I would stop writing no matter what even if I wasn't finished. This helped me with my time management to make sure that during the actual exam, I wouldn't run out of time. Then once I finished the past paper I would get up and take a 10-15 minute break before coming back to my desk and marking the paper. Once I did that I would go on with my day and then repeat the process again later in the day as this was during my break. I would recommend doing this only once a day for the students that take this exam in the May/ June period.



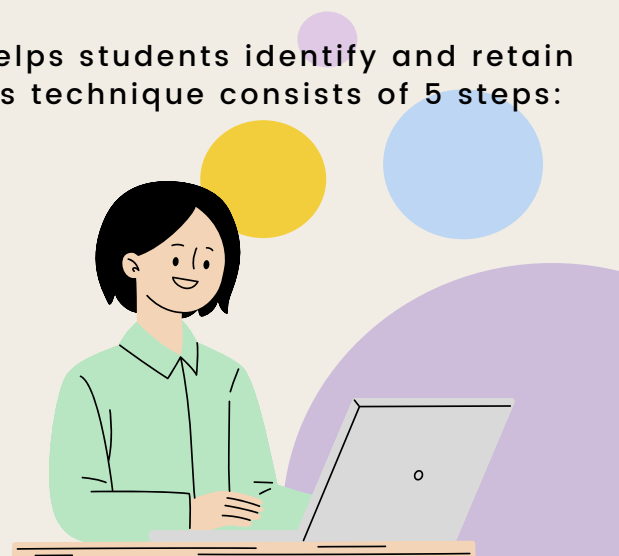
Q: HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU SPEND STUDYING PER DAY OR PER WEEK?

During my winter break I would aim to do at minimum 2 past papers a day this would equate to about 4 and a half hours of studying throughout the entire day, though for students taking the exam in May/June I would recommend start earlier and aim to complete and mark 1 entire past paper per day which I feel like should equate to about 2-2 hr 30 mins.

-STUDYING METHOD/TIPS - THE SQ3R (SQRRR) METHOD-

SQ3R is a reading comprehension technique that helps students identify and retain important content or facts from their textbook. This technique consists of 5 steps:

1. SURVEY - SKIM READ AND TAKE NOTES ON HEADINGS, SUBHEADINGS, IMAGES, DIAGRAMS OR CHARTS ETC.



2. QUESTION - FORMULATE QUESTIONS AROUND THE CHAPTER'S CONTENT E.G. WHAT IS THIS CHAPTER ABOUT? WHAT DO I ALREADY KNOW ABOUT IT?

3. READ - BEGIN TO READ THROUGH THE CHAPTER IN DETAIL AND LOOK FOR ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS YOU WROTE - DO THIS IN SECTIONS



4. RECITE - SUMMARISE IN YOUR OWN WORDS WHAT YOU JUST READ - TRY TO RECALL AND IDENTIFY THE MAJOR POINTS



5. REVIEW - ONCE YOU HAVE FINISHED GOING THROUGH THE CHAPTER/SECTION, IT'S CRUCIAL TO REVIEW YOUR MATERIAL AGAIN IN ORDER TO FULLY UNDERSTAND IT - QUIZ YOURSELF ON THE QUESTIONS YOU FORMULATED AND RE-READ ANY PORTIONS IF NEEDED



-QUESTIONS FROM STUDENTS-

Q: DO WE DO ALL THE TESTS IN ONE DAY?

A: NO, THE FINAL IGCSE EXAMS WILL BE SPREAD OVER THE COURSE OF AROUND TWO MONTHS. EXAMS WILL BE MORE TIGHTLY PACKED TOWARDS THE START OF THE EXAM PERIOD, WITH AROUND 5-7 EXAMS PER WEEK FOR TWO WEEKS. TOWARDS THE END, EXAMS WILL BE MUCH MORE SPREAD OUT, WITH AROUND 1-3 EXAMS PER WEEK.



Q: DO THE EXAMS ONLY INCLUDE THE TOPICS LEARNED DURING SCHOOL, OR DO THEY INCLUDE OTHER TOPICS THAT WEREN'T LEARNED DURING LESSONS?

A: EXAMS WILL ONLY INCLUDE ALL TOPICS LEARNT IN SCHOOL FROM YEARS 10-11. YOUR TEACHER WILL HAVE COVERED ALL SYLLABUS STATEMENTS FOR EACH SUBJECT, SO YOU WON'T NEED TO LEARN ANY NEW MATERIAL ON YOUR OWN TIME. FOR SUBJECTS SUCH AS WORLD LITERATURE ENGLISH, THERE IS AN UNSEEN PAPER WHERE YOU DO NOT KNOW THE CONTENTS OF THE PIECE OF LITERATURE, HOWEVER, YOUR TEACHER WILL HAVE GIVEN YOU SUFFICIENT PRACTICE AND INFORMATION ON HOW TO DO WELL IN THAT PAPER.

Q: WHERE CAN I GET MORE MATERIALS TO REVISE WITH FOR ALL OF MY SUBJECTS?

A: THE ISLE IS A GOOD RESOURCE TO FIND STUDYING MATERIALS FOR PRETTY MUCH ALL THE SUBJECTS. TO FIND PAST PAPERS, YOU CAN USE WEBSITES SUCH AS SAVE MY EXAMS. FOR HUMANITIES SUBJECTS (EG. BUSINESS, HISTORY ETC), IT IS RECOMMENDED TO MAKE NOTES ON ALL THE MATERIAL LEARNED IN CLASS, AND MEMORISE THE WRITING FRAMEWORK. FOR SCIENCE SUBJECTS, MAKING DETAILED NOTES ON SYLLABUS STATEMENTS IS EXTREMELY HELPFUL TO LEARN THE MATERIAL IN DETAIL. ADDITIONALLY, YOU CAN PRACTISE HOW TO ANSWER EXAM STYLE QUESTIONS THROUGH DOING EQS AND PAST PAPERS.



Q: HOW MANY PAPERS ARE THERE FOR EACH SUBJECT?

A:

Subject	Papers	Additional notes
Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics)	2 Papers for each science	Paper 1 is worth 120 marks. Paper 2 is worth 60
Mathematics	Further Pure - 2 papers Core - 2 papers	Further pure students will complete the normal maths papers in January, and complete the further pure paper in May along with the exams for the other subjects.
English First Language	2 Papers	Reading paper - directed writing Writing paper - composition Majority of students will complete this in Y10, some Y11s will do this if they take English as a second language.
World Literature	2 papers	Set text - literature studied in lesson Unseen poetry 2 coursework - empathic essay (Of Mice and Men), critical essay (Romeo and Juliet)
Languages	3 papers	Listening, reading, writing Speaking exam is done before the exam period which is assessed by your language teacher.
Business, Economics	2 papers	
History	2 papers	Paper 1 covers USA and Germany Paper 2 covers Russia & China
Geography	2 papers	
Religious Studies	2 papers	For paper 1 it is recommended to cover Christianity For paper 2 it is recommended to cover Buddhism
Drama	1 paper	Coursework done in class
Design Technology	2 papers	One which covers theory and one that covers product design.
Music	1 paper	Listening paper + 2 compositions + 1 performance
Art	No papers	All coursework (sketchbooks) done through the year. One 10 hour exam (that may proceed or not depending on covid)
Food Preparation & Nutrition	1 paper	Paper + course work which is assessed by your food tech teacher.