



Learning Lists for Science 8

How to Do Examinations

Contents Updated: Monday, 05 January 2004

- Preparation
- Technique
- Learn from Examinations

A. Preparation

1. Study conscientiously over a period of time
2. Key role—revision—revise systematically:
 - Revise continuously throughout course
 - not enough time later
 - aids future study.
 - Make a timetable for revision
 - List revision topics
 - allocate topics to each day
 - revise a variety rather than one
 - don't omit rest and recreation.
 - Revise with a friend
 - a gives better subject balance
 - can help each other—explanations, tests, etc
 - reduces anxiety and builds confidence
 - don't allow trivial chat—keep purposeful.
 - Find out what is required
 - Syllabus—what topics?
 - Past papers—what questions?
 - Anything compulsory?
 - How long for each question?
 - Practise what is required
 - Practice recall—creative patterns
 - Re-organise your ideas—more interesting:
 - discussions
 - assemble and revise all notes on a topic together
 - revise related topics together
 - criticise your old notes
 - re-write and write summaries.
 - Practice answering past papers
 - Analyse questions over past few years
 - Assemble related questions together
 - Write outline plans
 - creative patterns
 - convert to linear notes
 - keep for last minute revision.
 - discuss answers with colleagues
 - Don't depend on predicting questions but be able to answer popular ones.
3. On day before the exam
 - Don't learn new things

- Either revise normally or relax
- gather together exam equipment
- The evening before relax, watch TV—early to bed

B. Technique

1. Maintain confidence, therefore don't discuss exam immediately beforehand

2. Read right through the exam paper (5-10 mins):

- Note carefully the instructions
 - How long?
 - How many questions need answering?
 - Do any carry extra marks?
 - Any compulsory questions?
 - Are there sections to the paper?
 - Are any instructions different from usual?
- What is each question asking for?
 - Key verbs—do what is asked:

Analyse	Define	Illustrate	Reconcile
Assess	Describe	Interpret	Relate
Comment	Discuss	Justify	Review
Compare	Enumerate	List	State
Contrast	Evaluate	Outline	Summarise
Criticise	Explain	Prove	Trace

- Don't change the verb to suit yourself!

3. Budget your time:

- Allocate according to marks per question
- Equal time if equal marks
- Leave 10 minutes for checking at end
- Divide remaining time among questions
- Write down finishing time for each question.

4. Outline all questions to check how much you know

- Jot down main ideas
 - creative patterns
 - free association
 - keywords.
- Put into logical order
- Allow perhaps $\frac{1}{4}$ of the time for this
 - avoids repetitious answers
 - cross fertilisation of ideas
 - full answers easy to write
 - helps choose right questions.

5. Determine priorities:

- Compulsory questions first
- Best questions next
- Don't over-run budget time: $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2} > 1$

6. Answering questions:

- stick to the point
- do what is asked
- Be concise
- Write legibly—be presentation conscious
- Use diagrams to save words.

7. Checking:

- don't rush away—check answers
 - any important omissions—eg a “not”!
 - periods in calculations
 - faulty grammar or spelling.

- Don't have a post-mortem—it's always depressing.

C. Learn from Examinations

1. Exams have diagnostic value:

- Note examiner's comments
- Compare with model answers
- Discuss with the tutor
- Follow up your weak areas.

Reference

- D Rowntree, *How to Study*, chapter 7

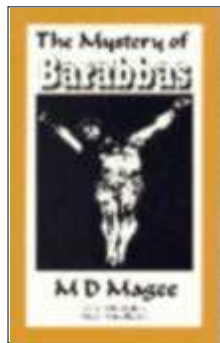
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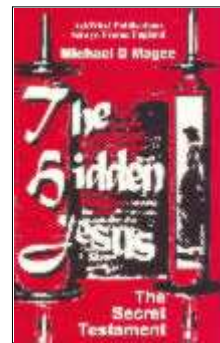
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