



***Enhanced Learning
Educational Services***
“the study skills specialist”

PREPARING FOR EXAM BLOCKS



Exam blocks can sometimes be overwhelming and many students do not know where to start. This guide will help you navigate exam blocks successfully.

The study skills handbook site (www.studyskillshandbook.com.au) has lots of extra information and activities for you to complete to help you build your skills for school. You will see references throughout this handout to recommended units to complete on the site. Your teachers will give you login details.

- You should read each point and **highlight the key phrases** in that point.
- Discuss with a friend or parent as you read through the handout.
 - You may like to work through this over a number of sessions.



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Enhanced Learning Educational Services Profile

Our Organisation:

Enhanced Learning Educational Services (ELES) is the leading provider of study skills resources in Australia. Since 2001 over 500,000 students across Australia have benefited from our study skills worksheets and workbooks. An Australian business based in Sydney, our clients extend throughout Australia and to international schools overseas. We are committed to helping all students improve their ability to learn and study by providing study skills seminars and resources on the topics students need.

Our Mission:

To provide a worthwhile and effective service to teachers, students and parents, enhancing students' learning skills and abilities through dynamic programs, resources and strategies to unlock the power of the mind and enable greater success at school and in life.

Our Commitment:

As part of ELES' commitment to education, 5% of all gross income is donated to charities that help and assist children.

For further information about ELES or our products or contact details:

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1. WHY DO WE HAVE EXAMS?

Sometimes many students don't understand why schools have exams – they think it is all about a mark on the report. But exams serve a number of purposes and if you understand this it may make you more accepting of having to study and prepare.

The main reason that examinations are necessary is to allow the school to determine what you have understood and learnt in each of your subjects. Examination results also allow your parents to gauge how well you are doing at school and what sort of progress you are making – and seeing that they are the ones paying for your education they are probably entitled to this knowledge.

Once you accept that examinations actually have a valid purpose and are not simply a ploy to torture you, you can start to think about how you can make the most of the experience from your own perspective.

Change the way you think about exams.

Rather than think about examinations as a time when you reveal what you DON'T know, consider examinations as a chance to show what you DO know.

It is an opportunity for you to learn about your own skills – what things you are good at and what things you do well. It is also a chance for you to work out what areas you need to work on to improve in your subjects.

Tick which of the following reasons you were already aware of:

- Exams give you an opportunity to demonstrate your skills and knowledge.
- Exams help you discover what it is you know and what you don't know.
- Exams help you isolate areas that need improvement.
- Exams allow teachers to assess how well you have learnt and understood the subject.
- Exams allow schools to determine your overall mark or grade for the subject.
- Exams help indicate your progress to your parents.
- Exams help you determine your strengths and weaknesses for future subject selection.



a. What is your attitude towards exams? How do you feel when you think about exams? Do you think you could see exams as an opportunity to grow and learn?

2. FACT FINDING

The first step of exam preparation is to find out everything you can about the examinations. Ideally it is preferable that you do this around 6 weeks prior to an exam block BUT often your teachers will not be able to give you too much detail until closer to the exam when the exams are finalised.

You can at least ask if you are being tested on the whole year’s work or part of the year. Make sure any questions you ask are asked POLITELY and at an appropriate time in the lesson - not when your teacher is mid-way through an explanation of a new topic. Questions to ask include:

- What topics are being tested?
- Are we being tested on the whole year’s work or part of the year?
- What is the structure of the exam i.e. what types of questions and how much are they worth?
- What sort of studying should I be doing for this exam?

If you have a number of exams it is a good idea to collect the information in an examination preparation grid:

Subject	Topics	Date/Time	Length	Format	Timing
Eg Spanish	Common objects	Tuesday	1.5 Hrs	20 multiple choice	20 mins mult.choice
	Greetings	May 16th	(90 mins)	2 sections each worth 30 marks	30 mins section 1
	People places & things	2pm-3.30pm		80 marks total	30 mins section 2 10 mins checking

Here’s an excerpt from a student’s timetable preparing for their final exams in Year 12. A wildcard day is where you wait and see what you need more work on.

M23 8-8:30 – Review yesterday	T24 8-8:30 – Review yesterday	W25 8-8:30 – Review yesterday	T26 8-8:30 – Review yesterday	F27 8-8:30 – Review yesterday	S28 8-8:30 – Review yesterday	S29 8-8:30 – Review yesterday
8:30-10 – English	8:30-10 – Wildcard	8:30-10 – Biology	8:30-10 – Religion	8:30-10 – English	8:30-10 – Wildcard	8:30-10 – Biology
12-2 – Struggling	12-2 – Wildcard	12-2 – Maths	12-2 – PDHPE	12-2 – Struggling	12-2 – Wildcard	12-2 – Maths
3-5 – English	3-5 – Wildcard	3-5 – Biology	3-5 – Religion	3-5 – English	3-5 – Wildcard	3-5 – Biology
7-8:30 – Struggling	7-8:30 – Wildcard	7-8:30 – Maths	7-8:30 – PDHPE	7-8:30 – Struggling	7-8:30 – Wildcard	7-8:30 – Maths
8:30-9 – Review today	8:30-9 – Review today	8:30-9 – Review today	8:30-9 – Review today	8:30-9 – Review today	8:30-9 – Review today	8:30-9 – Review today



b. Do you ask your teachers questions about the exams? If so when do you do it? Is there anything you need to change in your approach?

3. GET ORGANISED

Ideally being organised should have been an on-going process throughout the whole year so that when you get to the exams you are ready to start studying straight away.

But, if you haven't been doing this, it is not too late! (But remember for next time.)

To get yourself organised for the exams:

- GATHER ALL MATERIAL ON THE SUBJECT:** For each subject, get together all the material you need to study for that subject.

Do you do this step when preparing for exams: Yes /Sometimes /No

- CHECK NOTHING MISSING:** Check that you do not have anything missing.

Do you do this step when preparing for exams: Yes /Sometimes /No

- SORT NOTES:** Sort through your notes from each subject's topic into 'things to learn' i.e. content and 'things to practise' i.e. revision sheets, past tests, question sheets that you could do as revision.

Do you do this step when preparing for exams: Yes /Sometimes /No

- START STUDY NOTES :** Check if you have already done any study notes for your subjects.

Do you do this step when preparing for exams: Yes /Sometimes /No



1. ANIMALS → organisms EAT other org for $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{energy} \\ \text{materials for} \end{array} \right.$ $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{growth} \\ \text{movement} \end{array} \right.$

→ all "multi-cellular" org.

→ live on land, in sea, fresh water, some can fly

*** VERTEBRATES**

- all large land animals are vert.
- bone system gives support to live on land
- largest = blue whale (36m, 170 tonnes)
(water helps support weight)

2. PLANTS → multicellular organisms

→ contain chlorophyll ∴ can use sun as energy source

eg $\text{CO}_2 + \text{H}_2\text{O} \xrightarrow{\text{energy}} \text{Sugars} + \text{Oxygen}$

→ largest: maintain ash of SA > 100m in height

→ oldest living org: Californian Redwood, lives > 4000 yrs

*** GROUPS**

- mosses
- ferns
- conifers
- flowering plants

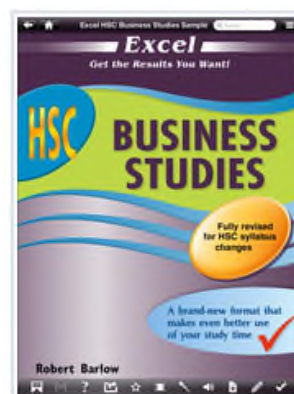
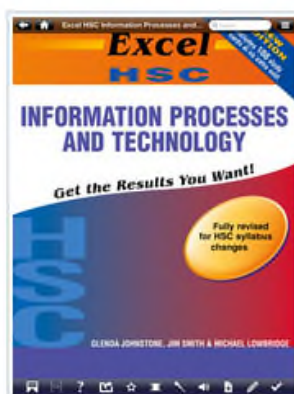
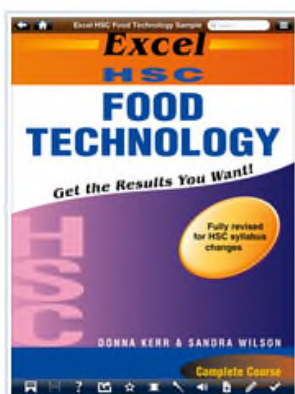
- **BRAINSTORM HOW YOU WILL STUDY:** Brainstorm everything you could do to study for the exam for each subject. Questions to consider include:

- Are there chapter reviews you should re-do?
- Are there past tests or essays you could re-do and resubmit?
- Can you get a list of sample essay topics that you can do draft essay plans for?
- Do your textbooks have sample examination papers?
- Are there particular topics you need to focus on?
- What is the most worthwhile revision you could do for this subject?

Do you do this step when preparing for exams: Yes /Sometimes /No

CHECK IF YOU HAVE ENOUGH TO STUDY FROM: Decide if you have enough resources to study from and if not borrow or purchase some extra books you can use to study from.

Do you do this step when preparing for exams: Yes /Sometimes /No



- **GET PAST EXAM PAPERS TO PRACTISE:** Find out if you can get past examination papers (and answers) to use as revision sources.

Do you do this step when preparing for exams: Yes /Sometimes /No

- **DECIDE HOW TO ALLOCATE TIME:** Decide if you are going to allocate equal time to each subject.

- Do some subjects need more preparation time than others?
- Do you need to spend more time on your weaker subjects?
- Are all exams for all subjects worth the same amount towards your overall marks?



Do you do this step when preparing for exams: Yes/Sometimes /No

DISCUSS

c. What are the main changes you need to make to the way you get yourself organised for exams?