

Managing exam stress

Everyone gets nervous; it's a normal part of exams. While it's not so easy to stop feeling nervous, you can use relaxation techniques to keep your nerves under control and focus on what you want to achieve.

Here are some tips and techniques you can try if you feel stressed before and in exams.

Before your exams

- Being prepared and doing the work will always help you feel more confident about sitting your exams, so do as much revision as you can.
- Celebrate your successes in revision tasks and know when you do well.
- Meditation and exercise are great ways to help clear your mind, leaving you feeling refreshed and energised. Plan something for first thing in the morning – if you start your day well, you are more likely to stay calm.
- Use deep breathing to relax your body and mind.
- Eat the right foods and drink lots of water – too much coffee and sugar for example can make you feel more anxious as they are stimulants.
- Use positive language with yourself and visualise your exams going smoothly.
- If possible, avoid classmates who are highly stressed or who want to talk about the exams.
- Practise your relaxation techniques so they are natural to you by exam day.
- Plan your exam day so you feel in control; allow for travel and proper meals.

In your exams

- Breathe – take some deep breaths to relax your body and mind. This will really help if you freeze up or are struggling to get started.
- Focus on your paper. Block out the exam room and other students.
- Read the entire question paper, answering the questions you feel most comfortable with. By answering these first, you will feel more confident and settle into the rest of the exam.
- Stuck with a question? Leave it. Work on the next one and then come back to it.
- Remember, it's not a race. You've been allocated a set amount of time – use it and make sure you have done as much as you can.
- Keep a good attitude and use positive language with yourself; your nerves will pass and you're not alone.

You can also search for advice on the internet if you need more ideas to find what works for you during exam time.

After your exams

Sometimes exam stress doesn't just disappear once you have finished your exams as you might be worried about your results. There are [post-results options available](#) to you if you don't get the results you need. But until then, take time to celebrate completing your exams and your achievements so far.

We have listed below some of the frequently asked questions we receive after exams to help put your mind at rest.

- **I forgot to label my answer**

If you forgot to label your answer with the correct question number, you don't need to worry about it, as our examiners will make every effort to try and match a non-labelled answer with the correct question.

- **I used a different colour ink instead of black**

While we always ask students to write in black ink when taking our exam papers. On the rare occasion a student uses a different colour pen, we will always ensure that exam paper is marked and that student receives the correct mark.

- **I answered too many questions**

If in your exam you were asked to answer two out of three questions and instead you answered all three. Our examiners will mark all three questions and your final marks will be awarded based on the two highest scoring questions out of the three you answered.

- **I didn't spell my name or family name correctly**

If you didn't spell your name or your family name correctly, then you can speak to your exam officer at your school or college, who will be able to contact our Entries team to resolve this issue. It is important that we have your correct birth name in preparation for your certificate.

- **I think there may have been an error in the question paper**

If after your exam you feel there may have been an error in the exam paper, then you should speak to the exams officer at your school or college, who will contact us. If there has been an error, we will ensure that this mistake won't affect your result.

If you feel that the error may have affected your overall performance in the exam, then talk to your teacher. If they agree, the exams officer at your school can apply for you to get [special consideration](#).

- **What if the examiner struggles to read (can't read) my handwriting?**

Our examiners have seen lots of different styles of handwriting and can usually work out what you have written or were trying to say.

Also, could parents also help with the memorising of quotations. Here are just some basic techniques (these will be put on to the English part of the school's website):

- if you cannot remember the full quotation - you can paraphrase as well (just remember the main message of the quote in your own words)
- write the quotations down, learn them by repeating them, and then test yourself by writing down the quotation again. Visual learners can always use images to prompt them into remembering quotations.
- use colour!! Different colours can be used for different characters. These can then be organised into mind maps or they can be written on to post-its and stuck around the room, the house etc. Flash cards can also be used - enlist someone who can test you.
- record quotations on to audio devices - ipods etc. These can then be played over and over. Watch a good adaptation of the film and get to the point where you can pre-empt the quotations. In this instant you are using both sound and vision to help you and you can see the quotation in context.

Thanks so much.

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