

# **STUDYING AND EXAM WRITING TIPS**

*ALL THE BEST FOR 2025 FROM THE EKURHULENI NORTH DISTRICT OFFICE*

## **PREPARE FOR YOUR EXAMS**

### **Attend school**

Attend school every day. Attend all intervention/SSIP classes and use the intervention material that you receive. You will get tired but keep on pushing. It is worth it.

### **Prepare thoroughly for exams to reduce anxiety**

You will feel confident when you walk in the exam room if you are properly prepared for the exams. This will reduce anxiety. Anxiety influences your performance. It is natural to feel nervous before you write, so take a few deep breaths to calm you down. Work on techniques to help you calm down before the exam and use them when you get anxious. A calm mind learns better and performs better under pressure.

### **Manage your time**

Manage your time. Plan when and how long you will study and how much time is needed per subject. Start studying NOW. Don't wait for the exams to start.

## **Remember the 5 Ps: PROPER PLANNING PREVENTS POOR PERFORMANCE**

### **Work through past papers**

It will help you to get used to the structure of the paper as well as the type of questions that are asked in exams.

### **Use the exam guidelines**

Go through the exam guidelines that your teacher will give you. It will help you to know what content will be in the paper, how to answer different question, what the structure of the paper will be and what will be in Paper 1 and Paper 2 if there are more than one paper in a subject. Languages have three papers.

### **Study actively, not passively**

Summarise work in your own word, teach the material to someone else (anyone around you), ask yourself questions. This strengthens your memory and help you to identify gaps in your understanding.

### **Repetition**

Review content over increasing intervals, e.g. 1 day, 3 days, 1 week. This technique improves long term memory.

### **Critical thinking**

Analyse and evaluate information, think about the work that you are learning, don't just memorise it. It will help you to answer higher order questions.

### **Review key concepts**

Focus on summaries, formulas and definitions.

### **Improve memory**

To remember work, it must be processed by your brain, meaning you transform information so that it can be stored in memory. You can only process content if you are actively repeating content and thinking about the work which leads to deeper understanding. The information must then be stored in your brain so that you retain it over time. You have to interact with the content when you are studying, just attending class and extra lessons is not sufficient to be able to store and later retrieve the data.

### **Self-assessment**

Track your progress, time left to study, past papers done etc.

## **Get enough rest**

Make sure you sleep enough before your exam. If you are overtired, it will influence your concentration.

## **Eat healthy. Drink enough water. Get exercise.**

Do not eat sweets while you are studying, but rather a protein or low GI snack. Get up and move around between study sessions.

## **Avoid distractions**

Put your phone away and stay off social media.

## **Be on time**

Make sure you are not late for your exam. You will not be allowed into the exam room within the half hour before the exam starts (between 8:30 and 9:00 or 13:30 and 14:00). You will lose your 10 minutes reading time. Being late will make you anxious.

## **Check your stationery and equipment**

Make sure you have everything you need for the exam with you e.g., stationary, calculator (check batteries) and a spare pen. Use a transparent pencil case.

## **DO NOT**

Don't study the hour before you write your exam. Rather relax and get yourself psychologically ready for the exam.

Don't discuss the work with your friends before you write. It will confuse you or make you anxious if you think you don't know your work as well as other learners.

DO NOT take your cell phone, smart watch or any other digital devices into the exam room. If you are found with these devices, whether you used it for cheating or not, you will not be resulted.

DO NOT try to cheat. You will always be caught and will not be resulted.

## **IN THE EXAM ROOM**

### **Read the instructions carefully**

Make sure you know how many questions you must answer. Make sure which questions are choice questions and which questions are compulsory. For example, you have to know which questions to select and answer in Language Paper 2; in History you have to select a certain number of short and long questions to answer. If you don't select the correct questions, you will receive zero for that question, even if you answered it correctly.

### **Read the questions carefully**

Make sure you understand what is asked. Identify the verb in the sentence. Underline the verb and the topic of the question, especially in longer questions. Make sure you answer according to the verb e.g. list, analyse, discuss and answer what is asked.

### **Time management**

Scan through your paper in the 10 minutes reading time you will receive in grade 12. Start with the questions you can definitely answer. Do not spend too much time on questions that you can't do, that will stop you from finishing your paper in time. Look at the time and make sure you know how much time is left. There will be a clock in each exam room.

Use all your time, if you are done and there is time left, read through your answers and check that you answered according to the question. Also check that you answered all the questions.

## Write neatly

Ensure that the teacher can read what you wrote. You will lose marks if the teacher cannot see what you wrote. In languages you will lose marks for spelling mistakes. Read through your paper when you are done to make sure your handwriting is legible. Remember that the final exams are not marked by your teacher but by an external marker. Your teacher might be used to your handwriting, but an external marker will not be.

## Mark allocation

Look at the mark allocation to know how much to write. Don't write one fact for 3 marks or a paragraph for 1 mark.

## Multiple choice questions

Think of the answer before you read through the different options. Read through all the options, don't just select the first one that looks correct.

## Paragraph/essay questions

Plan your answer. Be specific to the question. Be on point in paragraph/essay questions. Write down facts in a logical order and then broaden your answer around that. Planning will save you a lot of time. Make sure you know how to answer paragraph/essay questions specific to different subjects. Look at your verb. What must you do in your paragraph e.g. explain, compare, discuss, criticize etc. Make sure you understand the structure of an essay question.

## Formulas

Even if you battle to do a question, write down the formula that must be used. This could earn marks even if the answer is wrong. Use the formulas sheets attached for calculations where relevant. Make sure you know beforehand which formulas will be on the formula sheet.

## Subjects with a PAT component

Ensure that you do well in your PAT. The PAT component counts 25% and will boost your marks if you do well in the PAT.

## In summary - when answering questions

- Know the terminology
- Know the definitions (easy marks to get)
- Know the meaning of the action verbs
- Identify and circle the action verb in the question – know **how** you must answer the question
- Identify and underline the topic of the question – know **what** you must answer
- In scenario questions – identify the main question
- Spend sufficient time to read and understand the question
- Essay questions – know the structure for the essay in each subject, e.g. History, Business Studies and Economics
- Look at the mark allocation
- Answer the correct number of questions per section in subjects where you must choose certain questions – **read the instructions at the beginning of the paper carefully**
- If you cannot answer a question – don't waste time, go to the next question and come back to the question at the end. Just make sure your numbering is correct.
- If timeframes are given to certain sections of a question paper, try to stay within the timeframes e.g. Section 1 – 30 minutes; Section 2 – 20 minutes

## SUPPORT

*If at any stage you feel totally overwhelmed and stressed out, speak to a teacher to assist you. If there are circumstances at home that hinders you from studying, speak to a teacher. He/she will assist you or refer you for the necessary support. Remember you are not alone and there are support systems in place to assist you. Grade 12 is a difficult year, but stay positive, work hard, prepare, seek help if you need it and most of all, believe in yourself. **You CAN do it.***