

Handy hints for fifth years...

- Aim high - why not?
- Start work now and *stay focussed*
- Take A/B standard course questions seriously - revising for them will make it easier for the real exam.
- Make a structured timetable and stick to it - don't daydream!
- Vary what you study from - websites like Scholar, textbooks, jotters, notes, old essays, past paper questions, worksheets etc..
- If you know you already know it, don't keep on revising it; some topics will need more time than others.
- Isolate specific questions in past papers - don't waste time doing whole papers at a time until near the exam to check your knowledge.
- Keep extra-curricular activities going - you need to let off steam some time.
- Don't decide not to take an opportunity because you don't think you'll be able to cope - try it out and see what happens.
- On the other hand, don't do too much - prioritise!
- Don't peak too early - take some time off during the Easter holidays.
- Make the most of your free time during study leave.
- Stay away from the TV during study breaks!
- Remember all the things you've learned about studying from Standard Grade.
- Look back this time next year and know that you did all you could - and good luck!

1. Find what works for you:

Time
Where
How

2. Use all the support on offer

We're lucky to have it
Teachers are good at the subject and will help you

3. Work hard from the beginning

Start work NOW

It's too late by prelims/Christmas

Divide the year into three sections:

Now

- Organisation - get and use ring binders.
- Understanding - make sure you thoroughly understand your subjects.
- Not necessarily revise - have revision in mind and prepare to revise by keeping notes etc. organised.

Prelims

- Revise like you intend to for the real exams.
- Prelims are essential for you to have a back-up and for peace of mind; good results are a huge relief.
- Go to bed at a reasonable hour and wake up early.
- Go out into the fresh air during the day to give yourself a break.

Exams

- Allocate days for revision of certain subjects and really focus.
- Study in the school library so teachers are only a short walk away if you need help.
- Attend all normal periods and study in class and receive explanations.
- Study 5-6 hours a day.
- Take regular breaks.

The Night Before

- Don't panic, revise.
- Be confident.
- Be in early with correct equipment.

Hello, I'm Jason Long.

As you have already heard, you have to do a lot of work to get good exam results. I can't quote a figure that will get everyone the grades they want. But for many people, this may be several hours a night, and much more as the prelims and exams

approach. However it is important that you are honest to yourself about this time; don't imagine you have spent hours studying if actually you've been half-watching TV. The worst thing that you can do is deceive yourself into thinking that you've been working hard, but then do badly in exams because your studying time has not been concentrated or productive.

As you have also heard, you need to be ready to work from the beginning of the year, because otherwise you risk falling back in class. You mustn't let time pass while you don't understand things, because then you will just slip further and further behind. Don't pretend that you understand things when you don't. Don't kid yourself that you're fine if really you're falling behind. Make sure that you talk to people, preferably teachers, when you don't feel confident about what you have been taught.

Pay attention when you're in class. Don't imagine that you learn stuff best on your own, or listening to music or whatever, because you don't. You learn most in class, when you are actively being taught. Don't waste that time, because it goes surprisingly fast.

Perhaps most importantly, be genuinely interested in what you are being taught. When you are interested in what you are learning, you will find yourself putting the time in to learn it, and caring about whether you know it properly. And it's easy to teach yourself to be interested. Nobody is born interested in some subjects but not in others, so just put the effort in to be interested and curious about the subjects that you're being taught.

When it comes to revision, there is no special technique that works for everyone. Some people like mind maps; I don't; but that doesn't make them any less effective than any other method if that is what helps you learn. Personally, I find past papers are the most valuable revision materials, because the questions are always so similar year on year. But when you do past papers, do them properly; make sure you don't waste them. If you do them with the answer book sitting open then you won't learn as much - you have to work through them under exam conditions, and note down the things you don't understand. Then deal with the things that are hard for you, one by one, either by looking over the relevant bits of your notes, or by asking a teacher to explain it.

Not everyone finds that every teacher can explain things in a way that they can understand. But there are loads of really good teachers around, and if you are willing to ask them, any of them are willing to explain the problem.

So make sure you work hard and that you don't let yourself fall behind. Make sure that you take all your exams and all your subjects seriously; if you work hard for the prelim then you can save yourself some stress at the final exam. Make sure that you take an interest in the things that you are learning, and that you don't waste time in classes when the subject is being taught. Ask if you are struggling, and make sure that you revise hard when the exams are coming. Don't leave revision to the last minute, because that is when the holes in your knowledge become apparent, and you need time to fix them. If you do all of these things then you will be giving yourself the best chance when the exams come round in May.

On behalf of all of S6 who've been through it already, good luck.