

How to pass an exam

method marks (M) are given for attempting a correct method

accuracy marks (A) are given for correct working

A marks can only be given if the M marks have been given

so it is most important that your method is clear

remember: the examiner should find your answers easy to follow

special words used in exam questions:

Write down, state

answer should be fairly obvious – little or no work will be needed

Find, Determine, Obtain, Calculate

Some work will be needed, and you will need to show your method

Evaluate

Work out the value of an expression – is answer exact or say 3dp ?

Verify

You are given the answer – you just have to show that it works

Show that

You have to work out the answer as if it had not been given in the question.

You are given the answer because you may need it in the next part of the question – it gives you a re-entry point

Prove

A formal proof is required – each line of your answer must follow on logically from the previous line

Explain

This involves writing words (preferably in sentences!)

Interpret

Make a comment that refers to the context of the question

Exact

Not a decimal but a surd, fraction etc.

Hence / Hence or otherwise

Hence means you must use the last part of the question to do the next part

Hence or otherwise means you can use the last part of the question to do the next part (usually a good idea!) but don't have to

Sketch

Use pencil – draw axes with a ruler – don't use graph paper – label the axes – if there are two graphs, label each one

other points:

*Bring to the exam

pens (use a black pen, not a blue pen)

pencils, ruler, rubber, compass, highlighters

calculator (but don't bring the instruction book, or a lid with formulas on it, and remember to clear all the memories)

remember: C1 no calculator

*You have roughly one minute per mark

*Give answers to an appropriate accuracy

if final answer is to 3sf then all intermediate working must be to 4sf

*State each formula you need, before attempting to use it

*Start each question on a new page

* Write each step on a new line

*If a question has several parts (a) (b) etc:

label each part clearly

leave large gaps between your answers to each part

your answer to one part may well help you do the next part

if you can't do part (a) of a question, try part (b)

*If you have two attempts at a question decide which one you want marked and cross out the other one with a single diagonal line

*Trial and error is rarely an appropriate method

*If the final answer has a unit (eg cm) then include it

*If the final answer is a fraction then cancel it down

*If there is time at the end, read through and check your answers again

*In S1, graph paper must be used for:

box plots, scatter diagrams, histograms, etc

*If you are stuck, try drawing a diagram or sketching a graph.

*you can ask for extra lined paper

*you can ask for graph paper