

Math & Science Exams

Study Guidelines

✔ Review your formulas. Know how they relate to each other and how to incorporate information from one formula to help you solve another. Also understand what you are finding (not just the variables). Prof's are testing that you understand the material, not just that you can plug numbers into a formula.



✔ Don't ignore the big picture themes and concepts as this information will help you to organize, remember and recall the information.

✔ Do practice problems, especially ones that your prof's recommend. Old exams are also a great place to check for possible exam questions.

✔ If you are allowed to bring a formula sheet into the exam make sure it is well organized and easy to follow. Use highlighters or different colour ink to make it easier to refer to while you're writing your exam. You don't want to waste time searching through your formula sheet.

✔ Practice working on problems quickly using time drills. Three hours can go by faster than you think.

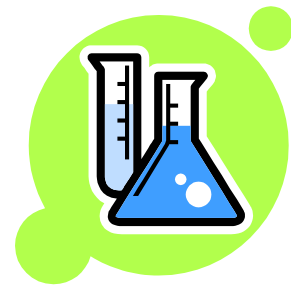
✔ Make sure you have everything you need for the exam prepared the night before. Calculator (make sure it's approved), pencils, erasers, formula sheets, student card, etc. are all things you do not want to realize you left at home when you go to write your exam!

Writing the Exam

✔ Read the instructions carefully. Do you need to answer all the questions or do you have a choice?

✔ Dump any information you are afraid you might forget. Write down formulas, processes, etc. on the back of the exam paper. This will help to reduce your anxiety as you won't be in danger of blanking on the material half way through the exam.

✔ Read through the entire exam and budget your time based on the marks allocated to each question. As you read each question underline the key or 'instruction' words.



🚩 Start with the easiest question. This will help you relax and think clearly. As well, this will guarantee marks in case you start running out of time.

🚩 Translate problems into English (instead of variables and ratios) and take time to read through them carefully. What are you expected to find? What variables have you been given? Are you expected to find the answer using a particular formula or process?

🚩 Write down what you know from the problem. This may help you see which variables you've been given and therefore which formula to use.

🚩 Make a picture. Visual representations can help unblock your mind and may get you part marks.

🚩 Make sure you used the proper form and clearly denoted the answer for the marker (they are less inclined to be generous with marks if you turn your paper into the Where's Waldo of answers). Underlining or putting a box around your final answer is a trick many students use to make their exam paper easier to follow for the marker.

🚩 If you get stuck on a question mark it, move on, and come back to it at the end. Wasting time on a question you don't have any idea how to solve only limits the amount of time you have to dedicate to questions you are prepared to answer.

🚩 Check your work! You don't want to lose marks for not carrying a 1! Start by estimating the answer. Does the answer you arrived at make sense? Is it possible? Systematically check the process you followed and the arithmetic (performing opposite operations works well). Avoid the temptation to change an answer in the last few minutes unless you are SURE that the answer is wrong. In the last-minute rush it is easier to get the wrong answer. If you redo a solution do not erase the original answer – just draw a line through it.

