



Tips and techniques you can try if you feel stressed before and during your GCSE 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 energized. 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 visualize your exams going smoothly.
- If possible, avoid classmates who are highly stressed or who want to talk about the exams.
- Practice 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.
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During 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 examiners will make every effort to try and match a non-labelled answer with the correct question.
- **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. 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; you can speak to your exam officer at your school or college, who will be able to contact the 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, who will contact the exam board. 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.

Additional support:

If you are feeling particularly overwhelmed or anxious at any time before or after your exams, talk to Head of Year 11 Mr. Chapman, Mr. Gill (Deputy Head), Mr. Kelly (Deputy Head), subject teachers, form tutors or parents. Remember, they have taken exams before and know what you are going through so they will be able to help you.

Alternatively, you might feel more comfortable talking to someone who doesn't know you.

ChildLine and other charities can provide confidential support 24/7 from experts who can help with concerns about school, exams and anything else that could be causing you stress.