

# **MACLEANS COLLEGE GUIDE TO EXAMINATIONS**

## **What is the secret to doing well in exams? – Good Preparation.**

Ask anyone who has succeeded at exams how they did it and they'll tell you some straightforward, common sense stuff:

- Work hard during the year
- Prepare an effective study schedule and stick to it
- Learn some basic examination techniques and apply them on the day.

Sitting exams doesn't have to be a stressful experience. Exams are designed to test what you know, not to catch you out. It's up to you whether you walk out of your exams wishing you could have the year all over again or satisfied that you gave it your best shot.

### **1. TIME MANAGEMENT**

*Give yourself 3 weeks to have enough time to study for all your subjects. Some subjects will need more time than others.*

"I didn't have time" must be one of the most used phrases, and why...our lives are busy busy busy. School, Homework, Co curricular, duties, Jobs, Family and Social time, How do you fit it all in? With careful planning.... A timetable is a great way to visually see and plan your week ahead. First select all the things that you need to fit in. Homework (be specific), Swotting, Co Curricular/ Activity, Duties, Job, Family time, Free time, Other. Now use coloured blocks to fit them into the week. It only goes up to 9.00 because then you should be unwinding and going to sleep by then.. If you can't fit them all in you will have to make a decision and change things around and prioritise.

### **2. ORGANISE YOUR STUDY SPACE.**

*Having a quiet and calm place to work is very important.*

Make sure you have enough space to spread your textbooks and notes out.

Have you got enough light?

Is your chair comfortable?

Are all distractions turned off or out of sight?

Is it quiet? – Sometimes some background music can help (in fact classical music has proven to help studying)

Do you have the right equipment?

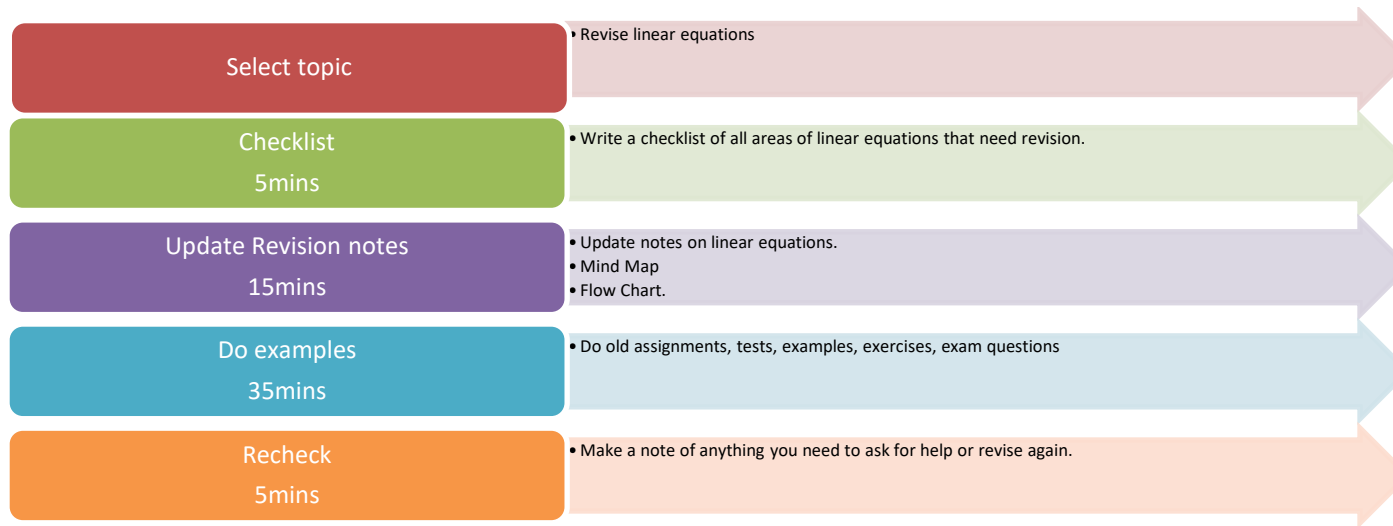
### 3. REVISE TO LEARN

*Revising what you need to learn is the key to success. It is quality that counts not quantity.*

When devising your revision timetable it is important to allocate short (  $\frac{1}{2}$  -1 hour ) periods of study with a specific focus for each study period.

Each revision session should have purpose. What do I not know that I need to know?

Example. SUBJECT: MATHS - in particular Linear Equations.



REVISION PROGRAMME			
Select topic	Subject		Specific Topic
	Date		
1. CHECKLIST - List all the areas that you need to revise. 5 Minutes DONE			
Checklist 5mins	1		
	2		
	3		
	4		
	5		
	6		
	7		
	8		
2. UPDATE NOTES - Write worked examples and notes on checklist topics. 15 Minutes DONE			
Update swotnotes 15mins	1		
	2		
	3		
3. DO EXAMPLES - Past exam questions, old tests, study guide. 35 Minutes DONE			
DO examples 35mins	1		
	2		
	3		
4. RE- CHECK - What do you still need to revise? What do you need help with? 5 Minutes DONE			
Recheck 5mins	1		
	2		
	3		
	4		

## Revision techniques

The least effective ways are those that involve just reading through notes over and over. The most effective ways are those where you interact with the material, making it meaningful to yourself.

For example:

- Summarising material under headings onto index cards or slides.
- Mind mapping
- Reworking the material into a chart or diagram.
- Discussing the material with other people. Setting up study groups.
- Being able to explain the concepts to others.
- Make links, comparisons and contrasts between different areas of your programme
- Practicing past exam papers/questions/model answer.

**If you are not sure try this model.**



#### **4. MANAGING STRESS.**

*Taking care of yourself during a stressful time is very important.*

Feeling stressed and anxious is a very normal feeling around exam time. In fact it is a good motivator. However, you need to do things to prevent stress becoming so great that it is stopping you revising.

So make sure you do the following things to be in the best shape possible to run the race!

**R** is for Relaxing – Spend time with family friends, listen to music, go for a walk.

**E** is for Eat well – Stock up on brain food. – Eat lots of fruit and veggies.

**S** is for Sleep Well – 8 hours a day gives your brain time to replenish and work harder for you.

**T** is for Talk it out – talk to your parents, friends about your exams – they have all been through it!

If you can't get your stress levels under control try talking to your teachers, SAS or your Houseleader. They can help you.

#### **5. WHAT DO I NEED IN THE DAY.**

*Being prepared beforehand eliminates extra stress.*

Make sure you know when your exams are – check the school website for your timetable. Write it down somewhere (stick it to the fridge!) Make sure you have all the equipment you need – in a clear plastic bag. Make sure you get plenty of rest before the exam so your brain is in the best working order.

Have a good breakfast and plenty of water!

#### **6. IN THE EXAM**

*This is your time to shine – show you teacher all the hard work you have been doing.*

You will be expected to be totally silent in the exam room. No communication with any other student. Remember you don't have to do the exam questions in the order that they appear on the paper. Try your hardest to answer as many questions as possible. Go back over your work and check your answers – editing, spelling etc... GOOD LUCK!

