



Notre Dame  
CATHOLIC SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

Using past papers effectively

# Previous attempts

Go through any past papers you have done in lessons / for homework and identify where you lost marks:

- which questions did you lose marks on?
- was it the type of question or the topic?

Re-revise the topics/questions you lost marks on and then re-attempt the questions – don't re-do the whole paper!

**GET THE QUESTIONS MARKED AGAIN**

# Teacher's advice

Use your teacher's knowledge to help you improve:

- Ask where you lost marks specifically
- Ask how to correct it specifically
- Create a checklist of key info/techniques to remember
- Ask if you don't understand anything in the above steps

# Peer advice

Use your classmate's knowledge to help you improve:

- Get a copy of a classmate's paper (with permission) from when they achieved higher than you
- Work out what they did right on the questions where you lost marks
- Copy what they did – the technique and skills, not the exact wording

# Mark Schemes

Mark schemes are a fantastic way to understand exactly what the examiner is looking for:

- Read what words/phrases get you the marks and which words/phrases are not allowed
- Also read the examiners 'advice' which can be found in a separate document on exam board website or at the start/end of the past paper

# How many past papers?

You should aim to complete 4 or 5 past papers per subject in the last two weeks before you sit each exam.

Paper 1 & 2 should be completed *open book & open time*

Paper 3 should be completed closed book but open time

Paper 4 should be completed in exam conditions

With papers 1 – 3, allow yourself to look up an answer if you are really stuck as this will still enable you to revise the information

# In the exam

1. Read the question twice before you write anything
2. Underline or highlight the key words
3. Jot down important info to include or, if essay based, create a mind map
4. Attempt the question
5. Read your answer back quickly once and move on

If you run out of time on an essay based subject, write down, in bullet points, what you would have covered next at the end of the essay...it may get you an extra mark!

# Where can I find past papers?

1. exam board website such as AQA, Edexcel etc.
2. Subject sections of SharePoint (Course Hub)
3. [thestudentroom.com](http://thestudentroom.com)
4. your teachers
5. most textbooks contain exam style questions at the end of each topic to test yourself



