Managing your time in exams

Read the following tips on managing your time in exams. Which ones are particularly important for you to remember? Is there anything you would add?

1. **Be informed** – As far as possible, know what is involved in the exam before you get there (no. of questions, type of questions, weighting, length of time etc.).

2. **Practise writing answers to past questions** – this will give you practice in writing quickly and clearly, and of what is possible in the time limit available.

3. **Read each question carefully** – avoid skim reading, and dismissing questions without any consideration of them. There might be a question which you pass over, because it is worded in a confusing way, but which might have turned out to be perfect for you.

4. **Divide your time up** – Make a plan of how long you’re going to spend on each question, note timings down and stick to them. This is likely to save time overall, as you will have a structure from the start.

5. **Consider what’s involved in answering each question** – With essay-style questions remember to assign time for analysing the question, writing a plan, and reviewing the question at the end.

6. **Plan your answers** – Writing a plan for answers can help you stay focused, and to write quickly and confidently. However, stick to your time limit for this, so you leave enough time to write up the essay. Practising writing plans for past essay questions can help you do this more quickly in the exam.

7. **Decide on your own approach in advance** – Are you going to write plans for all the questions first, or tackle each question individually? Are you going to tackle more straightforward questions first (to give confidence, to get you started, to leave more time for the difficult questions), or more difficult questions first (to get them out of the way whilst you are still fresh)?

8. **If something goes wrong…don’t panic!** – If you realise you have answered the wrong number of questions, or misread a question, try not to panic, but instead act to resolve it in some way. You could make a note for the marker in the answer booklet of what has gone wrong, and then use any time left to write a new or alternative answer in bullet point form.

9. **Check your answers** – Avoid leaving the exam room early. Use the time to check your answers – is everything clear? Are there spelling mistakes? Do you need to add anything?

10. **After the exam** – Avoid dwelling on the things you feel you could have done better – consider also the things you feel you did well.