

## **Tips on Effective preparation and Study Skills:**

The final C.B.S.E Board exams for Class XII and Class X are about to start in this crucial month of March respectively. For those of you who are appearing for these exams, here are tips that can help minimize the stress and study/prepare for their exams effectively.

### **1. Knowledge of concepts**

This is merely an acquisition of knowledge and is generally memory-dependent. For example: theorems in geometry and derivation of formulae in algebra must be learnt thoroughly.

### **2. Thorough understanding of all concepts and how they are linked to other related concepts**

This is linked to the interpretation of concepts.

For instance, you may know the definition of force, mass and acceleration because you have memorized the definitions.

But have you really understood how they are related to each other?

### **3. Problem-solving skills**

### **4. Applications of concepts to new situations**

Depending on the extent of preparation over the year, here is what you should try to cover before the exam:

#### **~ Do you study at the last minute?**

If you have not been studying throughout the year, but want to at least pass, prepare yourself by learning all concepts thoroughly and trying to understand as many as you can.

Do not attempt to master other skills, like problem-solving, drawing of diagrams and application of concepts to new situations, which you have neglected during the year. It will be difficult to master these at the last minute.

#### **~ Are you an average student?**

If you have been consistent throughout the year and already have a good grasp of all the concepts, but are still weak in Math, apply yourself to those areas where you are sure you will definitely score.

For instance, you could take problems which have already been solved by your teacher in class; practice those similar to these and some of the application-type questions, which are directly related to concepts you have learnt.

### **~ Do you top your class?**

In every question paper, there will be 10 to 15 per cent marks allotted to indirect questions, which are totally different from what you have already learnt or practiced.

They are based on a combination of two or more concepts learnt and are, therefore, somewhat tricky.

You need to combine your knowledge, understanding and mental skills intelligently to arrive at the answer.

If you have been taking your studies seriously and have been performing well consistently and are determined to excel, concentrate more on applying yourself to problem-solving.

Practice how to apply the knowledge and understanding to new situations both directly and indirectly.

This will help you to be more confident and answer most of the questions, if not all, correctly.

### **Revision tips**

Develop a timetable to monitor your progress. Make sure you allocate adequate time for fun and relaxation as well.

While revising a subject, practice writing. This would be an actual simulation of the examination itself. Plan your revision and complete it in time. This will give you a sense of achievement and build your confidence.

While revising, vary subjects and their difficulty so you don't get bored or disheartened. Set realistic targets of what you can achieve in the time available.

Spend as much time on recall as on reading. Practice by writing answers as you would do in the exam. This will help you remember the important points when you answer each paper.

Practice writing answers under exam conditions. Take three hour tests, without a break in between, preferably at the same time as that of the exam. This will help your body clock adjust to the examination time and conditions.

### **Focus on weak subjects**

Identify the subjects you are weak in. Suppose you are weak in, say, Mathematics put that at the top of the list. Create a list in a descending order -- starting with your weakest subject and ending with the strongest.

### **Consult past question papers**

Get the question papers of the last five years. If you have access to 21 sets, get them. Identify the most important lessons and chapters. Focus more on these.

But, at the same time, don't ignore the others. Every chapter will have one important point of discussion or knowledge area that you need to study. Be sure you identify it.

### **Create a study timetable**

Refer to that list of weak subjects and begin with the weakest. Depending on your level of comfort, allot days for each subject. If Mathematics is your weakest, allot three days a week to it. If you are good at languages, you can allot one day each for languages.

In this timetable, leave out the seven days prior to your exam date. For these seven days, you can create another table for revisions (you can name it the countdown table). This time, count down on the basis of the subject scheduled for examination. For example, if the first paper is Physics, then the first subject in your timetable will have to be Physics.

### **Note down formulae**

Write down important theories or formulas during your revision. These help cement the knowledge in your mind.

### **Increase your concentration**

~ Know your study style

Some people like to read aloud. Others like to sit in one place. Knowing what works for you could help overcome distractions. For example, if you like to pace and study, go to a place where there is less furniture, and people.

~ Break it up

If you are feeling sleepy, get some tea or coffee. Then, come back and try to write down what you have learnt. If nothing works, lie down for 15 minutes. Set an alarm and get back to studies when it goes off.

~ Get a study buddy

Discuss your timetable with someone you respect. It could be your parent, a senior or a peer. If you slip on a lesson, let the person know. That way there is a check on your timetable. You can even reward yourself if you have managed something before time. An ice cream treat could do wonders.

~ Discuss problems

Fix a time of the day when you can call up a friend to discuss problems any of you may have faced that day.

~ Jot it down

Write down whatever you know or have learnt.

~ Take care of your health

Eat well, sleep enough, and do breathing exercises.

### **Beating the stress**

Feeling the heat? Relax. First, identify the cause for the stress. The remedy will be based on that.

~ If it is your nature to get stressed out easily:

Try yoga or meditation classes. If your anxiety becomes acute, you might need to see a doctor

~ If you have not prepared well:

You are the safest, because it is just natural to be worried about your exams. But, don't overdo it. The minute you start feeling stressed out, take a deep breath, think of three things that make you happy. It could be something as inane as talking to your pet.

~ If you have not prepared at all:

You still have time, if you manage it well. The fact that you have left it to the last minute indicates you have done this before and are confident you will do it this time too

### **Time out**

To prevent mental fatigue, take a short break as soon as you notice your mind is losing concentration. Stick to activities that do not break your study continuum during these breaks. Avoid television and loud music. You will then be able to come back to your revision refreshed.

It is important to relax. Your mind and body perform at their best only if you get adequate rest.

### **Last minute revision**

Mark all the important points or jot them down during your earlier revisions, so that you can scan through them for the last minute revision.

"Do not waste time in reading and re-reading the entire book. Just scan through the important points, headings, examples, diagrams, tables and charts, etc,"

"Do not write too much while studying on the eve of the examination; instead conserve that energy for the actual paper."

Work on spellings, for one loses marks easily there. Concentrate on important questions marked by the teacher. Speak to friends who will NOT get you all worked up.

### **NO distractions**

Keep all unimportant issues at bay.

Right now, the board examinations should be your only focus. Stay away from distractions that could cause loss of concentration or unwanted anxiety. Stick to activities that do not break your study continuum.

### **The power of positive thinking**

Spend time with people who have a positive effect. It will rub off on you.

Avoid negative thoughts, such as 'Everyone else seems better organized, while I'm struggling.' Challenge such thoughts with positive thinking; for example, 'I have done well in exams before.'

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