



Getting The Best Results You Can

Part 1: Advice from teachers and former students

The Senior Phase of school is all about getting qualified and getting the best qualifications that you can. For many students, this means doing well in exams.

This guide has been written based on the views of Eyemouth High School teachers and Eyemouth High School students who have previously done well in exams. It is broken down into three parts:

1. Things that you can do in school;
2. Things that you can do at home;
3. Things that won't really help you (but which you might think will).

We hope you find it useful.

Mr B. Robertson, Depute Headteacher, August 2017

PART 1: THINGS YOU CAN DO IN SCHOOL

1. Take notes during lessons (may seem fairly obvious, but a lot of people don't).
2. Ask teachers for any resources they use like PowerPoints (many teachers are happy to give you copies; some share them using Edmodo or Glow).
3. Ask your teachers for additional work e.g. old Past Papers.
4. Speak to teachers about areas you are finding difficult. Ask for help - don't wait for them to come to you.
5. Find out when each subject offers study support and attend the sessions throughout the year. This may be before school, at break, lunchtime, afterschool or in their non-teaching periods. This also includes Study Zone.
6. Use self-assessment traffic-light colours (including in Planners) to identify where there are gaps in learning and then focus on these. This will also help you to keep a record of the areas you have covered in class.
7. Keep the Progress Record in your Planner up-to-date - this will help guide your revision at home.
8. Keep on top of deadlines by using your Planner.
9. Always keep note of which questions you struggle with (for example, after a class test, write down which questions/areas were difficult and do more work on these before the exam).
10. Make good use of your Study Periods and "free" periods. Make sure you are prepared for these and have meaningful work to do. Use them well and you'll save yourself time at home.

PART 2: THINGS YOU CAN DO AT HOME

1. For National 5 courses, you should be putting in a minimum of one hour's study per week per subject; for Higher and Advanced Higher courses, this should be a minimum of two hours a week per subject.
2. If you're going to get the best grade you can, you need to invest time working at home. Your work in school is just a small part of what you need to be doing. The people who do the best go the extra mile - they ask for more help, they take the initiative and practise more questions.
3. Read through notes that you've made in class - don't just wait for a test to revise.
4. Focus on the areas you have been finding difficult (you should have marked these as "red" in the self-evaluation section of your Planner).
5. Focus on difficult subjects and on the topics that are "red". Use specific targets listed in the Progress Record of your Planners to prioritise work. Act on feedback.
6. Access support materials that your teachers have developed for you (e.g. on Glow, Edmodo or the school website).
7. Do EXTRA questions e.g. complete SQA Past Paper questions (available on the SQA website). Use the marking instructions on this website to self-assess or peer assess. Arrange to meet your teacher to discuss anything you're not sure about.
8. Collect all the SQA Past Papers you can find and decide which ones to do to prepare for Prelims but also save some for the real exams (save more of the recent ones) so that you have had plenty of practise for both (this means you can record the scores you get and which bits are more difficult than others). This can take a bit of time and research it will help keep you more organised and is very helpful when you get to real exams and panic sets it! It can help you see how much progress you're making.
9. Create mind-maps or sets of cue cards for different topics.
10. Rewrite old notes/key information/things you find difficult to understand or remember when revising as more concise bullet points and cue cards help you to learn key facts. Also, you can use them to get someone to test you (for Sciences I usually wrote key points of the whole course on these; for Languages it helped me learn essays and verbs, etc.; for English it was for quotes and info about our novels and things).
11. Look at subject pages from other schools because sometimes these have lots of material - ask your friends if they've come across anything good from another school.
12. When working alone or in face-to-face groups, switch off mobile phones and tablets. If using a computer to complete work, shut down social media apps like Skype, Whatsapp & Facebook. Don't have the TV on.
13. Review deadlines. Look at all of the workload and plan to hit deadlines in good time. Many students find it useful to develop a weekly at-home study timetable.
14. Take your time with homework and make sure it's your best work - don't hand in something that's only partly done or that you've rushed.
15. If you've done poorly in something (e.g. a homework exercise) re-do it and ask your teacher if they'll re-mark it.
16. Catch up on any schoolwork you've fallen behind with or missed due to absence.

PART 3: THINGS THAT WON'T REALLY HELP YOU

1. Students often make the mistake of focusing their revision on topics they are interested in and which they know well, while avoiding revising more challenging topics. Don't practise exam questions you're already good at.
2. Reading and the re-reading notes and books without doing anything else. You need to do more than that. Practising questions, marking these and getting teacher or peer help/feedback is key.
3. Excessive note taking from books. It's easy to basically just copy your textbook and while it's important to put notes into your own words it can sometimes take up too much time and isn't very effective.
4. Ignoring deadlines or trying to postpone work.
5. Focusing on one subject to the exclusion of others. You need to develop a study timetable with includes ALL of your subjects.
6. Attending Study Lessons or Study Zone without a particular focus in mind.
7. Being frightened of Past Papers, not using them early enough, not getting feedback from teachers about how you've done with them.