



Exam room strategies: video tutorial

<http://www.screencast.com/t/XLgvoL8yvH>

Transcript

Introduction: Welcome to this tutorial on exam room strategies from the University of Reading Study Advice team. The tutorial is designed for you to go through at your own pace and you can pause it at any time.

Slide 1: Strategies for coping in exam rooms begin with the time building up to exams. It's important to ensure that you are physically and mentally prepared for the challenge ahead.

Try to make sure that you are getting enough sleep; you're eating a well-balanced diet and drinking plenty of fluids. These are not only strategies for healthy living but will also help your memory and brain power

Avoid too much caffeinated products, alcohol, junk and sugary food as these will likely have a negative effect on your ability to concentrate.

Slide 2: The day before the exam it's important that you do what's right for you but make sure you get some time to relax. Don't over-study and feel pressured by others to do so. You need to go into the exam room relaxed, well rested and feeling prepared so make sure you get plenty of sleep, you get yourself organised for the exam, you pack your bags, and know where you're going.

Slide 3: Waiting to go into the exam room can be an anxiety building time. It is best to avoid others who are talking about the exam as this rarely helps anyone other than the person doing the talking and is more likely to cause you more anxiety than to help you in anyway.

Slide 4: Once at your table, organise your desk, relax by taking a few deep breaths and listen carefully to any instructions.

Ensure that you know your timings for each question and jot these down somewhere before you begin. There are different ways to do this but in essay type questions you will want to consider allocating time for planning, writing and checking; either a question or a process at a time.

Slide 5: Before looking at the questions, you may also want to jot anything down that you feel you are likely to forget- perhaps some acronyms, key dates or definitions that you are concerned you might not remember in the excitement of the exam.

Slide 6: Once you have been told to start, read the instructions carefully on the exam paper.

Slide 7: You should now be familiar with these from your revision but check that these are what you were expecting and that you have allocated you time correctly.

If you have choice of question to answer make sure that you read them all through carefully before selecting. Mark the ones you think you can answer and then re-read them, checking for the context. The main reason why marks are lost in exams is because students answer a different question from the one that has been set, so it's important that you don't rush this stage.

As for the order you approach them with, this will depend on how you work in exams. Many prefer to start with the question they feel most confident with. When you start exams you are more alert and able to answer this question well which builds up your confidence for the late, more challenging questions. Others prefer to get difficult questions out of the way. Decide which strategy suits you best

Slide 8: It's unlikely that you feel that you are unable to answer any of the questions but if you feel this way look for questions where you feel you can offer part answers, or the one you feel you know a little bit about. Start jotting down some points and this may help jog your memory on other parts of the question.

Slide 9: When answering an essay based question, don't forget normal writing conventions. Writing a plan before helps ensure that your writing has a structure and also helps to stimulate the memory and give you a sense of control. Your marker will have a load of scripts to mark, so make it easier for them to award

you marks by presenting well-structured arguments and not some jumbled up ideas that come to you as you begin writing.

Slide 10: Don't panic if in doing this you start writing your answers later than those around you. Keep calm and believe in your own strategy

Slide 11: If your mind goes blank within the exam, don't worry this is not uncommon. Your first aim is to remain calm. Managing your anxiety will help you to think clearly. If you're stuck, move on to another point. Re-read the question and jot down some key words, as these might help to trigger your memory. If you feel really anxious, try some calm breathing techniques to bring your anxiety back in control.

Slide 12: If you have planned your exam timings out in advance it is unlikely that you will run out of time but if you do only have a short time left there are some key things that you could do. Most marks in an exam are earned for the basic points and concepts so make sure you get these down, even if they are in bullet form. You will also want to point out key aspects that you have not managed to cover yet. If you have written a plan make sure it is clear, as markers may take this into account if your essay is not complete. Finally give your paper a quick look over, making sure you have question numbers clearly marked and all the required details are legible on your paper.

Slide 13: When you come out the exam, you may experience a number of feelings, from euphoria to exhaustion. If you feel you have failed, don't worry you probably haven't. It might help you to check out the resit policy if this is a genuine ongoing concern. Try not to brood about what you'd written, what you forgot to write etc. – it's not helpful to you at this stage and instead try to focus on the points you did get right. A few days later it would be helpful to reflect on your experience and think about what you might do differently next time, and then prepare for your next exam.