

HOW TO ACE YOUR EXAMS

You're weekly guide to help you achieve your potential



Top exam advice from former students

Those who have 'been there, done that' give a sense of the reality and pressures from a student's perspective



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It is a long time since I sat in an exam hall, so I wanted to have a chapter in my new book 'How to ACE the Leaving Certificate' where student opinions were aired and feedback was relevant. The chapter gives a sense of the reality and pressures of the exams from a student's perspective.

I have listened carefully and recorded information from students who have been through both the Junior and Leaving Cert exams over many years. I have also surveyed sixty existing sixth years for their first-hand experience, asking them to think back to how they were feeling and their approach to the Junior Cycle exams; what they did right, what they could have done better, big mistakes and importantly what they learned. I asked these students to provide some study guidance for current fifth and sixth years. The advice below is useful to all Secondary School students but particularly pertinent to those doing exams.

Advice from former students to help you maximise your learning in school:

- Start revising now.
- Everything happens for a reason.
- Start practising exam questions.
- Practice exams at home under exam conditions.
- Separate notes with labelled dividers to make topics easier to find.

- As you approach exams, continue to attend class to the end.

- Failure to plan is planning to fail. Plan each day using your homework journal.

- Once an exam is done, take a break, move on, and start thinking about the next exam, never look back.

- Homework, revision and creating good quality notes are all good forms of study.

- Breaking a topic into bullet points is a brilliant way to help you remember it.

- Get into a weekly routine of study, exercise, social life etc., i.e. Every Monday; do the same thing, same for Tuesday etc. Stick to this consistently and you will be able to plan ahead better.

- Do extra study in the part of the day you feel more alert depending on whether you're a night owl or an early bird (This only applies to weekends and holiday periods obviously).

- Exercise will keep your mind fresh. Walking, gym sessions, cycling, swimming, or Zumba classes are all good. Do something you enjoy, whatever that may be.

- From the month of March onwards, you need to put a proper Lifestyle (Study) Timetable in place.

- Prior to the exams (the last six weeks), do morning trial runs on various food. You will definitely need to eat something substantial for breakfast on the days you are doing exams. - Be ruthless with your time. Allocate a time limit for each part of a question (depending on the marks available for that part).

- Social media commentators and mock papers only speculate about the contents of the final exam papers.

Nobody really has a clue what's on the paper, despite what they may say or have read online.

- Believe in yourself. You have come so far and have so many talents that cannot be measured by any final exam. Your results in this exam will not affect how proud your parents are of you or how important you are to all your friends.

- You need to figure out how best you learn. Some students learn by writing things out repeatedly, some by talking it out in groups, some by listening to recordings, some by reading, some by Internet research and others by typing out keynotes. A combination of the above learning styles may be your key to success.

- Try not to approach the exams with a negative frame of mind. If you constantly think 'I have to do so much study', it will be like carrying around a bag of coal. If you don't like a subject, think 'This subject isn't my favourite' as opposed to 'I hate this subject'. Thinking about life more positively can help you approach problem solving better.

- Share work around in a small group. Have information sharing sessions in someone's house. This reduces the amount of preparation you need to do in each subject, as your friends will already have done the research and checks on it. Sit down with the group and explain things to each other. Write down the key points from the shared session to enhance your own set of notes. If you are not comfortable in a group, get yourself a study buddy for the subjects you find difficult.

- Start revision (again!)

Joe McCormack has taught Maths, Geography, ICT, Technical Graphics, CPSE, Woodwork and Science in various secondary schools in Ireland for the last fifteen years. In addition to correcting exams for the Dept of Education and Skills and Dublin Examining Board he has worked in Ireland's top school for tuition, the Dublin School of Grinds. Through his experience and research, Joe has gained a unique understanding of the struggles and obstacles students face when it comes to Junior and Leaving Cert exams.

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EXPERT GUIDANCE TO GIVE YOU THE WINNING HAND TO ACE THE EXAMS

RECOMMENDATIONS AND MORE DETAILS ABOUT JOE'S BOOKS CAN BE VIEWED ON: www.acesolutionbooks.com



HOW TO ACE LEAVING CERTIFICATE



ACADEMIC YEAR SEPT 2018 – MAY 2019
POST LEAVING CERT COURSES AT QQI Level 5 & 6

Healthcare and Community Care

- Applied Social Studies
- Applied Psychology *New
- Childcare/Special Needs Assistant
- Nursing Studies
- Health Service Skills
- Pharmacy Assistant *New

Pre-University General Courses

- Pre-University Arts (History)
- Pre University Liberal Arts (English) *New
- Language & European Studies
- Pre-University Law
- Pre-University Business
- Human Resource Management *New

Pre-University Science Courses

- Pre-University Science/ Agricultural Science
- Animal Care
- Equine Business & Horsemanship *New

General Business

- Tourism
- Airline Studies *New
- Legal and Medical Secretary/Office Administration
- Beauty Therapy
- Hairdressing

Food

- Professional Cookery
- Food Science

Sport

- Sports Management & Coaching
- Sports Injury Prevention & Massage Therapy *New
- Sports Coaching / Sports Science

Multimedia and Computers

- Computer Systems and Networks
- Multimedia and Computers
- Creative Media
- Sound Production

The Arts

- Music Performance
- Art Portfolio

Advanced Certificates (QQI level 6)

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