

## Hot tips for Exams CRD 2017

### A. Study tips

1. Arrange a **place** where you study – quiet, away from distractions.
2. Set up a **timetable** – which days of the week will you study? How much time on each day? Which subject? Which standard/topic?
3. Know when your best times for work are.
4. If “motivation” is an issue, then be really realistic. Don’t say you’ll do 2 hours. Say you’ll do 20 minutes.
5. If you hate a topic/find it hard or just really aren’t in the mood: make yourself do **7 minutes**. Sometimes by that stage, you’ll be happy to keep going longer.
6. **Reward** yourself for achieving goals - a small lolly/treat, a computer game, a fave TV programme, a **timed** session on Facebook etc
7. Give yourself regular **breaks**. E.g. 45 minutes work, 15 minutes break.
8. Try some brain friendly study music eg <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WPni755-Krg> (Just google *study music* – that one is the first hit and my class mostly loved it.)
9. Stop studying at least half an hour before bed.
10. Set a decent bedtime. (“Start the process” early – brush teeth etc/set an alarm to stop watching TV etc and head off to bed).

### B. What to do during a revision session

1. **Active** reading is CRUCIAL – go over all your notes/handouts and annotate them, scribble notes in the margin, make links, draw arrows, draw little pictures/symbols in the margin, circle, underline, highlight. Reading without a pen in your hand is a waste of time, you’ll retain NOTHING. If you have material/textbooks you are not allowed to write on, make notes from it on paper...
2. Convert all your notes into study notes/summaries/mind maps: 1 A4 page? per standard, maybe one A3 for the whole subject?
3. Ask someone to quiz you on these study notes
4. Memorise **quotes** (English)
  - a. make a recording (on i-pod, mp3, cellphone) of quotes or other important material and listen to it while you are in the car/tidying your room etc
  - b. write the quote at the top of a piece of A4 scrap paper, fold over, rewrite from memory, unfold, check, fold again and repeat from memory until you are getting it right
  - c. get a friend or family member to give you a quotes test: they read the first few words of the quote, you finish it
5. Re-read the short stories/poems/novel, rent the film (English)
6. Do practice exams/write practice essays/answers – ask a teacher to mark them
7. Or – just write a **plan** for a practice essay/answer

8. Condense previous successful essays/model essays/answers to “barebones” - skeleton form
9. Buy or get a maths/science etc revision book out of the library – these books are great for content-heavy subjects – not so good for English
10. If you do practice maths exercises MARK THEM so you know where you are going wrong
11. Make up mnemonics to remember things e.g ROYGBIV (colours of the rainbow), Mark’s very extravagant mother just sent us ninety parakeets (order of the planets)
12. Visit: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications-standards/qualifications/ncea/subjects> for past papers, mark schedules and other goodies.
  - Pick a subject then
  - scroll down for *Resources for externally assessed standards*.
  - Click **Level 1** (or 2 or 3) beside *Exam papers and exemplars*
  - You can view past papers and real student answers
  - Big fat drawback for Unfamiliar text (English) – the resource booklets don’t show the texts as they are copyright. See if your teacher can loan you some.
13. Visit <http://www.studyit.org.nz/> This is great for content heavy subjects (only so-so for English) it’s the online version of a revision book and it’s free. It’s NZ based.
14. Visit <https://quizlet.com/>
  - Try typing something like *NCEA level 1 maths* in the search thingee.
  - You might get good results – but it might be written by a kid who has their facts wrong – take care.
  - You can get an account and make your own digital flashcards.
  - This is **not** a NZ based website.
  - In English, I use it to learn quotes by typing half the quote into the term box (*To be or not*) and half into the definition box (*to be that is the question*)

### C. Exam Technique

1. Skim-read the whole exam paper very briefly first (2-3 minutes).
2. Have a watch (no phones!) to keep track of time – E.g. English: 3 standards in 3 hours = one hour each.
3. Start with the standard you are best at/the easiest one/the one with the best essay topic.
4. God forbid you should run out of time BUT: if you do run short, this way you are writing drivel about your least confident standard, rather than being about to launch into the perfect essay topic on your strongest standard that was an almost guaranteed excellence.
5. English: If pushed for time, do Unfamiliar text last. It is **possible** to pass this without finishing e.g. by doing a thorough job of just (any) two texts OR a brief job of all three with a view to coming back and writing more if you get time.
6. When you have chosen an essay topic, **underline important words in the instructions/topic**.
7. Remember, **you are allowed to write** on any part of the exam papers, including the resource booklet for Unfamiliar Text (English). So, when you read the passages, do ACTIVE READING with your pen – underline things etc

8. Spend a few minutes **writing a quick plan** for your essay.
9. **Write clearly.** If your answer is not legible (readable) you may miss marks you deserve. If you make a mistake, cross out clearly, rewrite clearly.
10. At times you'll have a **brain-freeze**, feel stuck, bored and uninspired. At that moment you will look around the room and everyone else will be writing fluently with a look of confidence and concentration on their faces. You will feel like there is something wrong with you. **Don't panic.** Eventually you'll settle back into the flow and someone will look at you and panic. Everyone does this, just not all at once.
11. **If you have trouble starting a question**, try just free-writing whatever you can think of. Let the associations flow. Eventually you'll think of something relevant. Then you can cross out the irrelevant bits.
12. Don't be tempted to communicate to other students even by gesturing. This counts as cheating. If your last pen runs out (but hopefully you'll **bring two or three blue or black pens**) or you have some other need or concern, raise your hand and get the attention of the supervisors – don't try to get a pen from a mate using sign language. ANY COMMUNICATION COUNTS AS CHEATING.
13. **Proofread** all answers. Look for silly mistakes: *when you are in a hurry, the brainiest speller can make make silly mistakes.* (See that one?) *Or leave a whole word out a sentence.* (And that?)
14. If you are a poor speller you want to look at **least as clever as you are.** You'll look silly if you misspell a word that is in the question – that is a *copying* error. Poor spellers should look for their own obvious mistakes. So what if you can't spell psychoanalyse? You **will make 12 really dumb easy errors** that you actually **do** know. Find **them** and fix them.
15. **If you finish early**, you didn't write enough. You could proofread more. Go back and use these minutes.

#### D. Prior to the exam

1. Get a good night's **sleep**.
2. Eat a good breakfast or lunch – with some protein in it (meat/eggs/fish/cheese.)
3. Don't cram up to the last minute – in the last few hours just look at your **overview** (one page summary notes) – don't try to learn new material.
4. **Turn up early** at the right place at the right time – check and double check your exam timetable. Allow loads of time for **traffic** and last minute delays.
5. Immediately before the exam, chat about other things – don't get into panicked last minute discussions with other anxious students.
6. Expect some stress, this is normal. Think positive. All you can do is your best.

#### E. Make sure you know

What is in the exam for each subject.

- How many standards.
- Are there any choices e.g my class can choose poem or short story for written text.
- How many minutes to spend on each standard.