

Maths Exam Top Tips



Everyone valued • Every day an opportunity • Every moment focused on success

Time Management

You have 90 minutes for 80 marks.

1 mark = 1 minute

Some time left over at the end to check.

If you are spending 3 minutes on a 1 mark question, there will be an easier method.

Likewise, if you spend 1 minute on a 6-marker, you've probably missed something!

Underline key words and information

Wordy questions can be daunting.

Underline/highlight key information to help you pick out the things you need.

Cross out any red herrings – for example, information in a table that you're not going to need.

Tick each piece of information off as you use it so you don't miss anything out.

The easier you make it for the examiner to read your answers, the more marks you could obtain.

Lay out each step of your working clearly and include units where necessary.

Keywords

Estimate □ This means work out roughly by rounding the numbers to one significant figure.

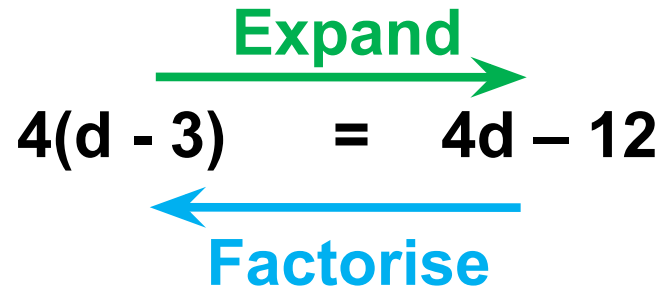
Explain □ Tell the examiner how you got your answer or how you know your answer is correct.

Construct □ This is another way of saying 'draw accurately' using mathematical equipment.

Calculate □ This does not mean use a calculator, it means 'work out' (and show your working!).

Complete □ This usually means to fill in a data table or to fill in gaps.

$$4(d - 3) = 4d - 12$$



Solve □ this means to work out the value of something; usually a variable in an algebraic equation.

Simplify □ This is the process of making something simpler, eg. algebra or a fraction.

Rounding

Make sure you read whether you need to round to decimal places or significant figures.

For example: 0.0453682

0.05 2 decimal places

0.045 2 significant figures

For example: 85762

85800 3 significant figures

Units and Conversions

Check: are the units the same throughout the question?

Check: are there units given on the answer line?

Remember:

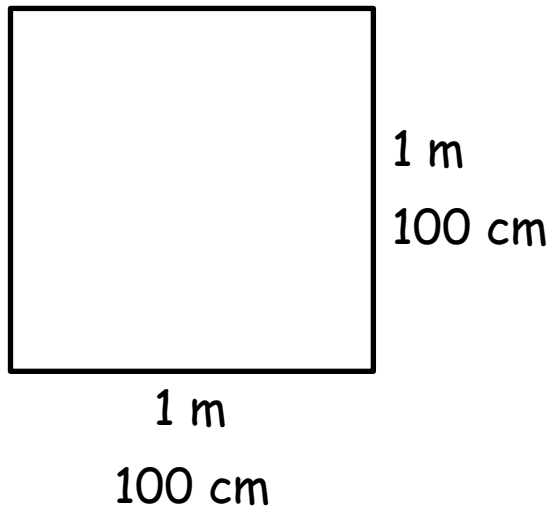
5 miles = 8 km

12 inches = 1 foot = 30 cm

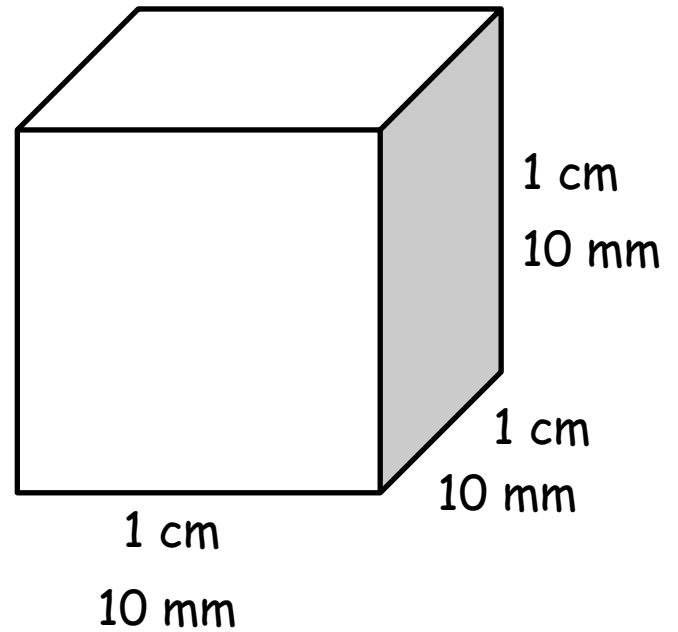
60 minutes = 1 hour

30 minutes = 0.5 hours, **NOT 0.3**

Units and Conversions



$$1 \text{ m}^2 = 10\,000 \text{ cm}^2$$



$$1 \text{ cm}^3 = 1000 \text{ mm}^3$$

“Give reasons for your answer”

Is it plural or singular? Use the marks available to interpret how many reasons to give.

This does not mean write an essay!

The examiner will be looking for keywords in your answer.

It might help to plan your answer briefly first to make sure you leave enough space for your reasons.

“Diagram not drawn accurately”

Rulers and protractors will be of no use here.

You will need to use angle reasoning, area and volume formulae, trigonometry or circle theorems to help you answer these questions.

Don't cross out your working!

...Unless you've got something better to replace it with.

Crossed out working cannot be marked. You are better off leaving incorrect working there and gaining one or two marks than gaining none.

Answer Everything

Again, you are better off leaving incorrect working there and gaining one or two marks than gaining none.

Why not have a go at that really hard question at the back? I bet you know some maths you can use for it.

Check Your Working!

If you finish early...

Check your working.

Don't just sit looking at the wall.

This doesn't mean just look at your answers, go over every step of your working to make sure you haven't made any silly mistakes with times tables or negatives.