

# Maths

How to get an H1 in the  
Leaving Cert Maths Exam



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## Introduction

Leaving cert higher level maths can often be a subject which many students find particularly difficult and worry about. But don't worry! Your knowledge and understanding of maths will be developed over the two-year leaving cert course, so don't worry if it's not always plain sailing, you'll get there- Rome wasn't built in a day. With effective revision and all the right resources (notes, Studyclix, your teacher etc.), you'll find that it's not as impossible as many make it out to be and you might even begin to enjoy studying maths

## How to study for Maths

While studying for the leaving cert higher level papers, I learned not to attack everything at once. There is so much in the course, and some of it can be confusing, but if you **break it down** into small, bitesize chunks, it is much more manageable and a lot less stressful!

So, what does it mean to 'break everything down? **Make a study plan**, assigning yourself a topic (or a part of a topic) for each week. While you might be able to cover the probability chapter in one week, I'd recommend you break down the **larger chapters**, like **algebra or calculus**, into smaller sections, for example, you could revise algebra I & II in one week. You will find that your revision will be much more effective if it's more focused on a particular section of the course.



## Exam questions are your new best friend

Maths really is one of the subjects, where almost all of your studying and revision should involve going through **past exam questions**.

- **Do** some (or all, if you're feeling particularly enthusiastic) of the past exam questions on the topic you've just revised, following your own study plan.
- **Always** practice past exam questions.
- **Avoid** attempting whole papers too early- leave this until closer to the exam as it can knock your confidence.
- **Don't** be afraid to ask for help along the way! This may be watching a Studyclix solution video or referring to your notes. This is not a failure; it is active learning!

## Staying healthy while studying

I can't emphasise enough how important it is to eat healthily and stay hydrated while putting in the long days of studying approaching the leaving cert.

**Always** have a bottle of water at your desk while studying and schedule **frequent breaks** for yourself. If you can't concentrate on your studying, especially maths exam questions, leave them be, go outside for some **fresh air** and come back with a



clear head. Don't try and push through the pain in this situation because it will only result in frustration and ineffective studying.

## Exam essentials checklist

On the day of the exam, your mind will naturally be racing, and adrenaline will be rushing through your body. This nervous feeling is normal and often beneficial! However, this may mean that you are more likely to forget the important equipment you need. My best advice is to make a checklist for yourself which you can go through the morning of the exam.

Two calculators (in the slight chance that one breaks (runs out of battery) in the exam. Make sure to use a calculator you are familiar with! Don't buy a new brand of calculator the week before the exam!)

Don't forget your geometry set, including a pencil, which should be used for constructions only

Finally, don't be afraid to ask for extra paper in the exam. If you do use extra paper, make sure to hand it up with the exam booklet, and label all your workings (e.g. 'Workings for Q2(a)(ii)')



### Tip

Watch tutorials on YouTube on how to do some of the more complicated calculator tricks for example, finding the standard deviation in the statistics chapter. These types of questions are easy marks if your calculator can do all the work for you!

You **won't** need your log tables; they are provided in the exam but make sure you are familiar with how to find all the **important formulas** you will need.

### Tip

If you are the type of person who needs loads of space to work out certain questions, don't be trying to squeeze it all into the exam paper, only to have a very full, very messy looking answer booklet, which is likely to stress both you and the corrector out!

## The Exam

### Exam Timings

Timing for the maths papers is very important, you really don't want to lose out on marks simply because you ran out of time. Lucky, this is avoidable.



Both papers are **2.5 hours** long and you must complete **2 long questions** (50 marks) and **four short questions** (30 marks) for **both**.

### Tip

Write your starting time on the top of your page for each question so you know how long you've spent on it.

- **Short questions:** Don't spend any longer than **20 minutes** on these
- **Long questions:** Don't spend any longer than **30 minutes** on these.

### Tip

If your question isn't completed in this time, don't panic, simply move on and come back to the question at the end if you have time.

- **Choice of questions:** spend a few minutes at the start of the exam going through the paper and picking your strongest questions to answer.

Don't **waste too much time** trying to figure out a really difficult question if you're getting nowhere with it. Every year, there are one or two questions in the exam



which are deemed 'impossible' for most students. If you can work it out, fantastic! But if not, just **move along and come back** at the end to give it one last attempt. At times, these questions aren't worth as many marks as the more manageable ones anyways!

## Your workings

When working out long maths problems in the exam, write down **every.single.step**. Even if you can do the sum in your head, **write down your workings**. Often, marks are given for these steps, and the last thing you want is to lose out on marks because you've done a sum in your head or your calculator but haven't written it down. **Never scribble out your workings!**

### Tip

Use a **pen**, not a pencil, because pencils can be smudged quite easily. Do not use tippex! Its messy, a waste of time and unnecessary.



Best of luck in the exam!  
You will be great





