

Tips for Students

Tips for the State exams

'Blog' by Orlaith Farrell - 6.1

The personal thoughts of a 6th year student

So guys, since I had a day off today and really couldn't face the books, I thought I may as well do something productive and write a few hints and tips for the Leaving..or any other exam really! I've just thrown together some of my techniques and general organisation methods that I thought might be useful to you guys who are feeling a little freaked out at the mo!



Well first things first, **ORGANISE YOURSELF!** It seems like the hardest thing to do at first, but believe me; once you get down to it 50% of your stress is gone. If you're the type of person who has sheets of paper crumpled at the bottom of your bag, or "misplaced" those notes you got in Geography last week, listen up! Buy yourself a **good folder**, and don't worry it's never too late to start organising.



Personally, I have one mega folder where I keep everything and a couple of small ones for subjects like English and Business. I store everything in my big one, be it tests or notes. Each section is divided so when I go to study I can kill 2 birds with one stone. Sure it's a burden to carry and if it goes missing there will be trouble (which happens frequently thanks to the practical jokers I call my friends!) but in the long run it gives you a great piece of mind.

(Here's mine, sorry for the shocking picture quality, all pics were taken on my phone!)

Orlaith's

Folder



Next, make yourself out a timetable.

Now lets be realistic about it, you're not going to study all of Hamlet in 2 nights! Set it out over a period of time and give yourself enough time to get it done. I think it helps if you work towards a specific date or event.

For my Summer & Christmas tests and my mocks, I **made different timetables for each** and gave myself around 4/5 weeks of study time.



Trust me, you feel great at night crossing off everything you've studied!

If you're a worrier or a stresser (comme moi!) timetables ease the stress and pressure because you actually see the work being cut down each week. Makes things a lot less daunting in the run up to the exam!

Also, another thing I find great is making **visual boards**.

Visual boards you ask? Well back in 5th year, (when I was in the period of serious cabin fever due to the snow) I made a visual board for my Leaving cert. Some people call them *dream boards* either.

Anyway mine is filled with little motivational tips and phrases, the course I want cut out from a prospectus, my dream number of points and other little snip-its.

Okay, I know it's pretty sad but when I sit down to study and become the teeniest bit distracted, it pushes me straight back to the books.

I don't know if it's just me, but one of my friends also gave it a try and it works!

Orlaith's Visual boards



I put loads of snippets from articles on my board, but I also keep all the **supplements** in the papers.

Coming up to the Leaving Cert, the papers go wild with these! Between CAO applications, past student experiences, the low down on all the colleges and so forth.

If you're still iffy on what you want to do or where you want to go (pretty much everyone in the country), take a look at them. They are filled with some great advice and you get an idea of what the course and college is like.

I guess this only applies to the LCs but none the less it's no harm to hang onto some of the wise words of the students. The amount of times I've read the columns on people who received 600 points is beyond me!



Now for my personal fav, the **stationary!**

I'm a stationary junkie (yes I am aware how sad that sounds) but I just love the stuff.

In my opinion, it's a vital part of learning and it makes things so much easier.

Some of you may not agree and think the page becomes more like a bag of skittles than actual facts! But hey, who said learning can't be fun!

I suppose my OCD comes into play with this one, but I'm sure there are more of you out there...well at least I hope so or I'm a bigger nerd than I thought.

For me, it starts with the pens... Staedtler. Red, blue, green and black.(although I'm not a fan of a black since I heard examiners prefer to read blue pen than black pen, but that's just a myth!)



For me there's a system ...

Heading - red. Key word - green. Explanation - blue. Example -

black.

Because I do this for every subject, it makes learning ten times easier.

As weird as it sounds, when I'm in the exam *I can picture what I have written* and go through it in my head. It'd be a lot more difficult to identify key words and explanations from just black text, then again that's just me. Then there's the **highlighters**. I take 3 core ones.



Yellow, green and orange.

Personally I'm not a fan of the purples or blues, I just think it *darkens* the pages rather than...highlighting it?! (fail of a joke) And I hate pink...just because it reminds me of 3rd year when I highlighted EVERYTHING pink. Not recommended!

Once again, it's the same thing.

Follow the **colour system** and it works. Especially for things like Business where you need to give clear explanations and examples.

After that then you have the usual things, rulers, rubbers, toppers, tip-ex, Sharpie (not necessarily an essential but they're fun!) post its and whatever else.

Post its and those coloured tab things

(I have no idea what you call them!) are a major essential also.

For every subject I like to add **post its**, so I can summarise things in my own words. You know when you're looking back over things and thinking holy God what does that mean! Post its make things that bit easier and also allow you to know where the key things are in the book.



And finally **the big day**.

As long as you keep your cool and stay calm you will be fine.

There were many exams I walked into the past 2 weeks, freaking out about and shaking and trembling, but when I walked out I was wearing a grin like the cat in *Alice in Wonderland*.

There's no reason to panic if you've put your work in and are determined on your goal.

A few things I brought into the exams were:

- My **watch**, (of course!) set a few minutes too fast to keep you writing and keep the adrenalin pumping,
- **Hand sanitiser**, this one is probably just me but I always have hand sanitiser in my bag after the exam, I hate all the blue pen and sweaty hand thing!,
- and finally, a **mug of tea**! Some girls bring in water, but I like to have the cuppa tea beside me to calm the nerves. A cup of tea always solves the worst problems!

So that's pretty much all my little organisational hints and tricks! Nothing that different from what you've heard before probably.

My best advice is just to **keep your brain focus and relax!**

You have one chance at this so keep your cool as best as you can, and until the big day, try get yourself on track to those 600 points...or you know...passing the leaving would do either!

Thanks for reading guys!

