

Advice on answering questions

Reading, understanding and answering exactly what a question asks is a skill in itself and failure to do so can often be the reason marks are lost in the pressure of an exam. Below are some things to take into consideration when you are answering practice questions for revision and in the exam itself.

- Read the question! This sounds obvious but so many marks are lost for answering questions that were never asked.
- Never half-read a question and assume you know what the answer is going to be!
- If there are numbers or data in a question – like a graph or a table –make sure you make use of them in the answer. Quote them wherever you can.
- Understand the question. Words like explain or describe tell you exactly what to do:

Describe means that you should say what you see;

- “The graph shows that more vigorous exercise leads to a faster heart rate....”

Explain means that you need to include the word because;

- “Vigorous exercise leads to a faster heart rate because...”

- Highlight key words in the question.
- Look at the allocation of marks. If there are four marks available then you must state *four different* things. Stating one and describing it four different ways will only get you one mark!
- Section the question if applicable and answer each one in turn:
 - Identify structures A to D/and explain their functionsBoth parts of this question should be answered in turn.
- Take time to read through the paper before you start. Identify areas of strength and weakness (hopefully there will be more strengths). Once you know you can answer most of the paper you can relax!
- Take deep breaths, relax and get ready to show off your talents to the examiner.