

# Writing examination answers

**You can increase your marks by applying good technique.**

## Choosing your questions

- make sure you **understand the instructions**
- **read all the questions** first and look for topics you have prepared
- make sure you **understand the questions**
- underline **key words in the question** to remind you to stick to the point
- you could **roughly sketch out answer plans**, to help you decide which questions to answer, and/or to check later that you have not left anything out
- **allocate your time** in blocks, to avoid spending too much time on earlier questions and not enough on later ones
- whilst time planning, check the **marks allocations per question**
- you might note down **start and finish times** against your chosen questions
- remember you'll need a few minutes at the end of the exam for **checking through**
- **don't be put off** by others who might start writing immediately.

## Writing your answers

- **start** with a question with which you feel **confident**
- write the **question number** clearly in the margin
- keep handwriting **legible** – there may be penalties if you don't, even failure
- **use a clear written style** – short sentences are preferable

- pay attention to **layout** and **paragraphing**
- **leave a few lines** between answers – for clarity, or for any last-minute additions
- **keep the question in mind** as you write
- **be careful** not to spend so long on the first question that you can't do justice to later ones, which might be more challenging
- **re-read** the question when you have finished your answer, to check for relevance
- go for **quality over quantity** of words – you need to give your ideas without waffling
- be aware of whether (and how) you must show your **rough work**
- **cross out** anything you don't wish the examiner to read
- **don't miss out** part of a multi-part question

## Towards the end of the exam

- if possible, **re-read** your answers and clarify where necessary
- incorporate any **new ideas** if appropriate
- make sure answers are **correctly numbered**
- **put right** any mistakes
- have a strategy to use **if you run out of time** (e.g. finish the question you're on in more concise style, and move on; or – sketch out a draft for an answer you haven't started to try and gain some marks)
- **stay to the end** – if you leave early you will think of something you could have added