

10 COOL KEYS

TO SUCCESS IN BOARD EXAMINATIONS

Planning
+
Determination
+
Smart Work
+
Hard Work
=
SUCCESS!

COOL KEY

1

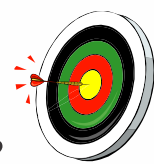
MAKE YOUR SUBJECT-WISE GOALS

What are your realistic goals for each subject and overall for your upcoming examinations?

Let's say, you want to get 90% in mathematics and 90% overall. What if the examination was this week? What marks could you get? Let's say, this week you could get 60% in mathematics and 50% overall.

The questions you need to think about are:

- How am I going to bridge the gap of 30% to 40%?
- Should I give equal importance to all my subjects?
- Should I study the most difficult topics and subjects first?



COOL KEY

2

MAKE A SMART STUDY PLAN

Do you have a written plan yet? If not, make one now! If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.

- Making a smart plan is the same as sharpening the saw before cutting the wood. It ensures that you can achieve more in less time.
- To make a smart plan, first make a list of all subjects in columns as provided in your 10 Cool Keys Planner. Put the subjects you find EASY in the first column, MODERATELY DIFFICULT in the second column, and DIFFICULT in the third column.
- Similarly, divide all topics in each subject on separate sheets into three columns: Easy Moderate and Difficult.

EASY SUBJECT	MODERATELY DIFFICULT SUBJECT	DIFFICULT SUBJECT
Physics Topics	Chemistry Topics	Maths Topics
Easy: _____	Easy: _____	Easy: _____
Moderately Difficult: _____	Moderately Difficult: _____	Moderately Difficult: _____
Difficult: _____	Difficult: _____	Difficult: _____

COOL KEY

3

MAKE A TOPIC-WISE REVISION PLAN

Do you revise your difficult topics first? Don't!

- To gain the maximum marks, you need to move from EASY to DIFFICULT topics in each subject, and not the other way around.
- For concepts you are good in, practice for speed and accuracy and avoid careless mistakes. Avoid overconfidence at all times.
- For concepts you are moderately good in, you can consolidate these by yourself as you understand them somewhat already.
- For concepts you have a limited understanding of, go back a few steps and build understanding from below class level. Going back to the basics might be quicker than struggling away at the class level.
- When you still cannot understand a concept on your own, seek the help of others like peers and teachers.



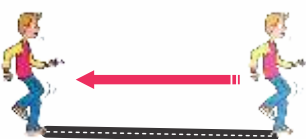
COOL KEY

4

WORK BACKWARDS, NOT FORWARDS

- Working backwards means to first attempt a question (ideally, a question from past papers), then read theory, and not the other way around. Reading theory first will kick in your short-term memory, and give you a false sense of how much you really know. Also, you know you cannot read theory first and then answer questions on exam day. Besides, you will remember more on EXAM DAY the questions you found hard to recall and struggled with during revision time.
- Then, if you cannot recall or apply logic to solve a particular question, go back to your textbook and look up just that amount of information / theory that you will need to answer it. Use your textbook as a reference book (like a dictionary).

- It is most important that you mark with a highlighter pen (in your textbook) all the bits you could not recall. This way, you will start to build up an inventory of the facts that you should especially attempt to memorize for exam day. These serve as your personal revision notes.
- Once past questions are mastered, move on to cover model questions in the topics that did not feature fully in the past papers, just in case those topics come up in the exam, but do not attempt these before you have attempted all the past questions first.
- Put yourself in the examination mode right now, and use every minute that you study to gain marks.



COOL KEY

5

MAKE REVISION NOTES INSIDE YOUR TEXTBOOK

- Revision notes should not be made in a separate notebook.
- Your textbook is the best place to mark the key points (using a highlighter pen), and add any other notes to it using Post-it Slips. Stick these Post-it Slips (yellow sticky paper) right inside the pages of your textbook.
- You are more likely to recall things marked in your textbook which you see frequently, than notes made in a separate notebook that you hardly even look at. Many students spend many precious hours on making meticulous revision notes that they hardly use afterwards.
- Do not mark up large chunks of your textbook. Instead, highlight just those keywords and most essential facts or formulae on as few pages of your textbook as you absolutely can. Try to reconstruct the rest of your chapter around these bookmarked pages.
- As time is limited just before an examination, these highlighted words and pages with sticky notes will come in really handy as your personal revision notes.

- Do not highlight anything in your textbook till you have attempted past papers first and found certain gaps in your understanding or memory while working backwards from questions. Otherwise, you risk marking too many pages based on assumptions. The only real way you know something is important to you is through your failed attempts while solving past questions.
- Mind maps, graphic organizers and other visuals will help you in better remembering and later recalling information that you had trouble with remembering. Stick or attach these mind maps on relevant pages within your textbook.
- Flip through, read and re-read these marked pages frequently, especially when you are tired and cannot engage in work that requires more effort.



COOL KEY

6

MAKE A DAILY REVISION PLAN

Do you have a daily revision plan?

- Before embarking on revision, you should make a clear plan, using My Smart 10 Cool Keys Planner (if you have one).
- Make weekly plans in pencil so as to adjust and fine-tune your strategy each coming week. Differentiate and re-adjust your priorities to fit in with the time available.
- Allocate a "realistic" measure of time for what you can accomplish each day.
- Make a note of what your stumbling blocks have been in each week of revision. Improve upon these each new week.

- Be determined to meet the goals set for each new day and week.
- Consider by what date you can start a second round of revision.
- Narrow the field each time you revise by allocating unaccomplished tasks from the previous round of revision to your next round of revision, or by eliminating those you have truly mastered, as you move from easy to moderate, to difficult topics as suggested.

COOL KEY

7

WORK TO IMPROVE YOUR AVERAGE

Do you revise your easier subjects last? Don't!

- Imagine your 5 or 11 subjects are like 5 or 11 mango trees. Your job is to get the most mangoes off these trees in the shortest possible time. You can get more marks with less effort in topics which are easier for you to master. It is just like plucking off all the "easy-to-get" mangoes from the all trees first.
- First focus on those topics in every subject in which you can gain the most marks with the least amount of effort. That is, that help you improve your average.
- Cover all the topics which are easy for you to master in all your subjects first before you move on to the moderately difficult topics in all subjects, and then at last cover the most difficult topics for you in all the subjects.

- Change subjects and topics from science to language, for example, so that you do not tire yourself by using both your left and right brains.
- For students in the top ranks, you will need to work on your difficult topics as well, to gain every possible mark. The rest of you must first work on easier topics first, to maximize efficiency with which you gain marks. Sometimes you may have to drop the most difficult topics in some subjects altogether if time is short, or you will lower your average performance.
- Make sure you are able to score full marks on your easy topics without committing careless mistakes.



COOL KEY

8

MANAGE YOUR TIME WELL

How do you organize your time to be most effective?

- There are 168 hours in a week of which about 60 hours or so (9 hours per day) of efficient work is better than 100 hours plus of ineffective work.
- A four-hour cycle of good sleep is the absolute minimum. Ideally sleep 6-8 hours to be effective. A short siesta in the afternoons boosts your productivity for the rest of the day.
- Start your study at a time when you are most alert and most relaxed.
- When you feel tired, take on easier tasks like reading and re-reading those portions you have marked in your textbook that you need to memorize. Read for 15 minutes at night and re-read the exact same

- text in the morning for 15 minutes or so. This way you will retain more. Early morning is the best time for memorizing.
- Avoid the temptation to watch TV. It strains your eyes, and clutters your mind, which affects your memory, though you think you are relaxing.
- If you are tired, or find you are being inefficient take a break. Take a walk, meditate or simply close your eyes, and listen to relaxing classical music.
- Remember, you are studying not to please anybody else but to gain knowledge and marks.



COOL KEY

9

MOTIVATE YOURSELF

Do you rely upon others to motivate you? Don't!

- No one can push you harder than you yourself.
- Do not rely upon external motivators, be it parents, teachers or peers.
- Do not let others discourage you either. This is your project. So, motivate yourself.
- Parents need not be experts, or much educated, to help you support your revision. Involve your parents to help you monitor your progress against your plans.
- Make a deal with your parents in advance to give you certain awards for completing each task. Share with them as and when you complete each task. Claim

- these awards after the exams.
- You can learn much more by your own effort. What you don't understand, ask your peers, teachers or tutors. Don't let tutors run your revision.
- Improve your motivation by changing your place of study.
- Study in small groups of 3 to 5. This can create a charged learning environment.
- Choose your group members well; those who want to study seriously.
- Be determined to succeed, no matter what.



COOL KEY

10

DE-STRESS YOURSELF

Do you get stressed out and think it to be all impossible? Don't!

- Thinking positively helps avoid stress. Remember, stress lowers efficiency.
- Get adequate sleep daily, or you will burn out, fall sick, and lose marks.
- Create a manageable daily routine. Don't wake up at 3 a.m., wake everyone else up, and fall back into sleep again!
- Start studying at a time when you are most alert and most relaxed.
- Revise in strict 1.5 hour Study Sessions. Turn off any email notifications, phone or text alerts.
- Take a short 15 minute break after every 1.5 hour Study Session.
- When you are feeling tired, take on easier tasks that you enjoy doing.
- Don't change your routine, or else your biorhythms will be affected, and make you feel unmotivated. Biorhythms affect our physical, emotional and intellectual well-being.
- Worrying creates anxiety and reduces your capacity to work. At no time should you waste your time worrying.
- Stay focused avoid any form of negative self-suggestion. Talk yourself into thinking and feeling positive. This is the hidden key to success.



DEAR STUDENTS

"You are definitely better than your exam results show. The moment you walk out of the examination hall, you could have done that paper much better given a second chance! Unfortunately, however, there is no second chance and your future choices are likely to be limited by the marks you get. Studying smarter is so simple, why not go get all the marks you possibly can."

"The period between course completion and the Boards is when you can make huge gains in marks irrespective of your relative position within your class. Just follow the keys above and succeed beyond what you possibly can accomplish without them."

"All of us study better as we get closer to an examination. If you make a written plan as suggested, maintain a daily calendar, get serious and create a feeling of urgency now, you will begin to work more efficiently towards your goal. It's just a matter of weeks and you will be free from exam pressures for a long time to come. I know you can. So, start by absorbing the 10-Keys and get going. Determination creates magic."

All the very best! Dr Sunita Gandhi
sunitag@globaleducation.org

ABOUT THE KEYS

The 10-Keys have been written by Dr Sunita Gandhi based on her personal journey from being an average student to getting all Grade A's in Class XII (A-Levels) in the UK, then qualifying for the toughest competition to receive three merit-based scholarships at Cambridge University, UK—the Trinity College Scholarship, the Cambridge Commonwealth Trust Scholarship and the Overseas Student Award, followed by her being selected to the most competitive Young Professional's Program at the World Bank in Washington, DC. She was living away from her family and had to clean her own quarters, cook and wash. She also had to juggle between work for wages and studies. These 10-Keys have been helpful to countless students since 2004 when she first wrote them.

*Ph.D., Cambridge University, U.K., President, Council for Global Education, USA, Educator of the Year 2014 by India Book of Records, Member, CII National Committee on School Education, Lead Facilitator-Worker, Global Dream Campaign for Literacy.

PARENTS AND TEACHERS

STRATEGY SESSION

Students do not often get the guidance they need to work smarter. Our usual advice to work harder or to work on weaknesses are not sufficient to help all children gain maximum marks. We encourage parents and schools to do a strategy session on these 10-Keys with the students.

WRITTEN PLANS

Most students do not have written plans (as per Key 2 above). Planning makes learning efficient.

GLOBAL DREAM

We invite you to make India literate. Check out www.facebook.com/GlobalDream2f2e. Lend a hand after you complete your exams.

PROGRESS TOOLS FOR BOARDS

X-XII ICSE / ISC / CBSE

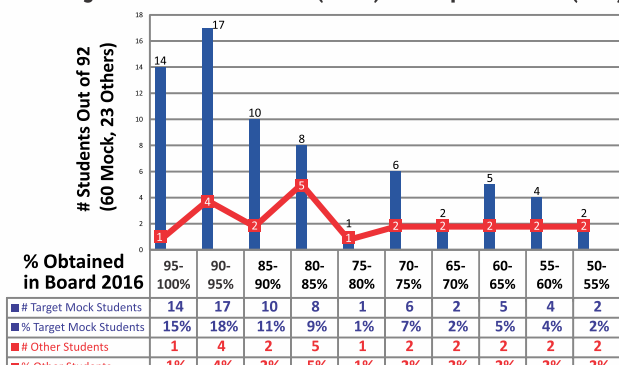


TARGETplus

Gain marks with every TARGET Plus mock, personalized reports and smart study solutions matched to your exact needs both offline and online. Find out how.
www.thetargetplus.com

Board 2016 Results for Maths, Class X

TargetPLUS 90%+ students (BLUE) far surpass Others (RED)



Results of 2016 Board Results for ICSE, CMS Gomti Nagar Campus 2

SCHOOLS

Increase the number of your 90+ percent centers with each mock, personalised reports and smart study solutions that save time and improve marks for all students. At the school above, 45% (31 students out of 69) in the targetplus group got marks above 90%, while 5% that did not participate in the mocks got marks above 90%.