

## AQA Exam Tips

Some top tips for the AQA exam to help you on your way to exam success.

Ψ **Be nice to the examiner.**

If you are asked for 'two reasons', write 'Reason one', underline it and write about it. Then write 'Reason two', underline it and write about it. If you are asked for 'aims and procedures', 'Aims.....' and then a second paragraph 'Procedures.....'

Ψ **Give only what you are asked for**

If a 6 mark question asks for *one* criticism or *one* study don't give 2 or 3. You are wasting writing time as you will only be credited for one.

Ψ **Be clear with the examiner.**

If there's something that seems a bit unclear to you, write a little note to the examiner. For example, 'This study is relevant because....' or 'This part is trying to point out that....' and so on.

Ψ **Use of bullet points.**

This depends on what you mean by a bullet point! If it is complete sentences, including elaboration with a bullet point in front, then it's fine. If you mean a list of key words then this communicates little understanding and only some knowledge, therefore fewer marks.

Ψ **What about diagrams?**

Again, this demonstrates knowledge but not understanding. A diagram of the multi-store model is a basic response to a question asking for a description of this model. Diagrams are a useful part of an answer, but they must be supplemented by explanations.

Ψ **What to do if you are running out of time...**

Write 'Run out of time!! - but I would have done the following'. Then try to give the examiner as clear an idea as you can of what you intended to do.

Ψ **Never, ever cross anything out, including your plan.**

Even if you do too many questions, let the examiner decide which ones are worth marks and which ones won't be credited. If you have time to write a brief plan, don't cross it out. There may be something in there that can be credited. Remember the examiner is looking for marks.

Ψ **Positive marking.**

If in doubt write it down. The exam is marked positively. The examiner is looking for things to give you marks for, not areas where they need to be taken away.

Having said this, a weak answer is one that is 'flawed and muddled'. The 'write one excellent answer and a quick, not very good one tacked on the end' exam strategy never, ever works.

*N.B. Positive marking does not mean that if a research methods question asks you which method has been used, that you can write down many methods and hope one is correct. The examiner can only mark the first one you write down in this case as there is only one answer.*

Ψ **Never ever leave a question blank.**

Write something (anything!). You always know something about a topic even if it isn't very much.

Ψ **The more you write upon the paper, the more material there is for the examiner to find marks.**

Never leave early ever. Stay writing until the invigilator forces you to stop.

Ψ **Examiners don't have favourite subsections.**

Just because everyone talks about Milgram a lot doesn't make 'obedience' any more likely to come up than anything else.

Ψ **Quality of written communication.**

This is basically spelling, punctuation and grammar, but it also covers things like clarity of argument and appropriate use of technical terminology. The odd spelling mistake or grammatical error won't cause you any problems, but anything more could result in a loss of up to two marks, and this includes illegible hand writing. If you know your hand writing is poor, try to improve it a bit, before the exams. Examiners don't have time to decipher your writing.