

Put yourself into the shoes of the VCE examiner

The VCE examiner marking your paper doesn't know much about you. In fact, all they see is your student number!

1. First impressions count! Are you reasonably neat and tidy? Are your calculations set up correctly? Would you appreciate the same quality of presentation given to you, to mark? Remember that the examiner cannot read your mind – they generally do not possess crystal balls to predict what you meant and they certainly do not know what type of student you are (unlike your teacher). Therefore, it is important to keep your writing legible! Also, a good idea is to highlight your answer and to use numbers so that the VCE examiner can follow your logic.
2. Answer the question... Many students do not answer the questions in their VCE exams. A common problem is “beating around the bush”. For example, take the simple question – “what is your favourite colour?” A proper answer would be ... green (or whatever your colour is) – normally you would not say “my favourite colour is not pink because pink is too girly”. Obviously, this does not answer the question! In this case it is simple to observe, however when there is theory involved it may be difficult to realise that you are not answering the question. Eventually if the VCE examiner cannot understand your answer then the marks for that question are not going to be high!
3. Be sure to keep units and show workings; Maths and science subjects require VCE students to set out their work in a neat and logical flow. Calculations should always be shown for questions worth more than 1 mark. It is important that you have units in your workings. Remember that VCE is a competition – you must go that extra mile to ensure a better ATAR!

4. Impress the VCE examiner; Isn't it strange that a person you have never met will be so involved in your VCE experience? Well, you can always work on impressing them. In a VCE exam you have only 1.5 up to 3 hours of communicating to the VCAA examiner everything you have learned throughout the year. Obviously, you will not be able to communicate your entire bank of knowledge – but with the proper set up of you answer, and the correct keyword/phases you will be able to show the examiner that you know the topics thoroughly.
5. Do VCAA papers last from later year to recent. Since VCE papers written by VCAA are so important – it is advised that you leave them for last. To write up the current paper, VCAA analyses the topics that were not understood well. They introduce this concept again so that a selection between students can be made. Pay close attention to the VCE questions that were answered poorly... because these concepts are most likely to present themselves in your exam. Also read the comments within the assessor's report – even if you get the question correct. This ensures that you do not miss out on valuable information!
6. It is all in the timing! Let's face it – you can know it all, but if you do not have your timing right it is a serious disadvantage. To improve timing, it is important to practice VCE exam papers. To ensure that you do not run out of time – translate the mark into a minute value (this is a general rule). Another idea is to leave long complicated answers to last – although it is tempting to start from the beginning of the paper, and finish at the end, we recommend that you do questions that are straightforward. This ensures that even if you run out of time, there will be not “easy marks” lost!