



The Harefield Academy

IMPROVING EXAMINATION RESULTS



Dear Parent/Carer

Achieving A*-C grades is very important as this is the entry level qualification for many higher courses and for some jobs.

Staff have produced a booklet in order to help all concerned understand what is needed to improve a grade D at GCSE to a grade C. We have also included advice on how to get started and details of help available in and out of school. We have also given details of what needs to be done and how best you can help. The Academy will provide extra support.

I urge both parents and students to read this booklet very carefully and follow the advice given.

Yours sincerely

Mr P Quinn
Senior Curriculum Leader

FOR PARENTS/CARERS

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP YOUR SON/DAUGHTER GAIN GOOD GRADES

Encourage them to work hard. Students who do well, work 10-15 hours a week outside school time. The number of hours should increase as the year goes on.

Time off is important. It is good to have a complete day and evening off each week. Encourage them to use this time actively so they get a complete break. Activities such as youth clubs, playing games or visiting places of interest are helpful in ensuring time off is a complete change.

Make sure they have a quiet place to work. It is difficult to work with a television on, although music, providing it is not intrusive, can help. If they share a bedroom and it is their work place, arrange a time when they can have it on their own.

Provide a place where work can be safely kept. Encourage them to label and file work properly.

You should have a copy of the coursework timetable. Encourage them to keep to deadlines. Remember these dates when arranging the family calendar.

Breaks during work are important. Help them to include favourite television programmes as breaks in the evening's work.

Your son/daughter will be given notes on the language of examinations and preparing for examinations. Please read these and help in the ways suggested.

Being appropriately prepared for school each day is important. Help them pack their bag the night before.

Make sure they get a good nights sleep. Learning is difficult if you are tired.

Make sure they have a suitable breakfast and take on enough fluids throughout the day to maximise learning and concentration.

Students who do well take responsibility for their own work. Please do all you can to help the development of self-confidence and the ability to think independently.

FOR STUDENTS

WHAT TO DO TO GAIN GOOD GRADES

Students who do well work hard. You should do a minimum of ten hours work each week outside of lesson times. Aim to work for fifteen hours each week.

Read the note in this booklet provided for parents. It is important to plan your work so you keep to coursework deadlines, have time off (at least one full day and an evening) and have breaks during work.

Do not try to work with the television on. Music can be helpful but if you find your are listening to it too much, turn it off.

Keep all your work safely. You will need it for revision.

Look at the sheets in this booklet prepared by the Heads of Department in each subject. The notes tell you what to start doing immediately and what you need to do to improve a D to a C grade. They also tell you the help that is available in school and suggest where help is available outside school. Follow this advice carefully and ask for help when you need it.

Start revising early. You will be provided with a list of revision topics by your teachers. You will also be provided with notes on how to prepare for examinations and the language of examinations. Follow the advice given in these notes.

Sort out any problems with work as they arise. If you do not understand a topic now, you will not understand it if and when it comes up in an examination.

If you have any problems which affect your work, talk to your tutor or Student Manager. The school can only help if you let them know what is happening.

Remember - success depends on you. Your teachers and parents can help, but in the end it is the work you do which will lead to good grades. The only place that success comes before work is in the dictionary.

ENGLISH /LITERATURE GCSE BOOKLET

Examination Board and Syllabus - AQA English Language/Literature (2 GCSEs)

1. What to start doing immediately to improve

- Hand work in as early as possible to allow time for advice to be given and to re-draft for a better grade.
- Attend all lessons. 75% of the English exam is prepared in class. Only 25% is based on unseen materials. All texts examined in Literature are taught in class.
- Read broadsheet newspapers to improve formal English and vocabulary.
- Re-read poems identifying themes and quotations that illustrate them.
- Re-read prose and think about what the writer is saying and how the ideas are conveyed. What is the effect on the reader?

2. The difference between a Grade C and a Grade D

Task: Compare the way that poets present human suffering in “Limbo” and “What were they like?”

Grade D

“Limbo” is a dance in which people have to move under a stick. This dance represents the life of a slave. “What were they like?” is a set of questions and answers about the Vietnam war. The answers show people suffered.

Grade C

*Both poets consider human suffering but use different devices. “Limbo uses the dance as a metaphor for the life of a slave who is forced down,
“down
down
down”*

This candidate demonstrates a deeper understanding of the poems and uses language of comparison to help structure the argument. Evidence from a poem is provided.

To improve the grade still further.

Grade B

The repetition of the word “down” emphasises the oppression suffered by the slaves as does the downward pattern of the lines.

To gain a B is it necessary to add an explanation and include a keyword from the task.

Continued.....

Where can you get help in school?

- After-school sessions.
- Easter revision sessions.
- Homework club in LRC – Monday to Thursday after school. Use websites listed above the computers to help you revise and deepen your understanding.
- Ask fellow pupils and teachers for help to catch up with any missed work due to absence from school.
- The LRC at lunchtimes.
- Take advantage of any trips offered.

Where can you get help out of school?

- Use revision websites at home or in public libraries.
- Attend theatre productions of set plays.
- Consider revising with groups of friends. Each person could prepare a poem and discuss it with the others.
- Read widely in your spare time. Get a list of exam texts, past and present, from your teacher.

MATHEMATICS

Examination Board & Syllabus – Edexcel Linear Mathematics

1. What to start doing immediately to improve

- Concentrate on errors!
- Go over examination papers and homework, look at the problems and try to resolve each one. Spend time revising topics you DON'T understand. Do not spend too much time on those that you know well.
- Buy a revision guide.
- Work now at a moderate pace rather than think there is plenty of time prior to the Mathematics GCSE.

2. What do you have to do to gain a Grade 'C' Grade?

(to achieve a Grade C, you must be sitting the Higher or Intermediate papers)

- Past questions are the key. This is when you find out what you can and cannot do and is the best way to revise for Mathematics.
- Do one question at a time and then check the answers. If you are correct do another. If not then revise that topic and then try a similar question. If you are still having trouble seek help. It may be that you are misunderstanding a key component of the topic.
- From your revision book, read just one page a day, between now and the examination. A drip feed approach in Maths is good. When even the smallest problem arises, ask for help.
- From the syllabus, concentrate on fully understanding grade D questions and make sure when Grade C topics are taught, you understand each point.
- In the examination, remember you must prove to someone else that you understand. If a question is worth 3 marks, have at least 3 lines of working out.

Where can you get help in school?

- In lessons! These are free and need no extra time. Do not waste this resource.
- The LRC at lunchtime and after school.
- Help from staff after school, particularly when coursework is ongoing. Thursday night is Maths Night. These sessions are free and staff are willing and able to give you lots of help and guidance.
- Easter revision classes.

Continued.....

MATHEMATICS

Where can you get help out of school?

- If you maximise your use of time in school – no extra help will usually be necessary.
- Public library.
- www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize
- www.mathsnet.net - use the links.
- Past questions from your revision book. Do a topic a day and start now.
- 20 minutes extra work each day will be better than all the last minute panic. This is equivalent to 4 exam questions. THINK – A minute a mark!!!

SCIENCE

Examination Board and Syllabus – Edexcel 360 Science Core and/or Additional GCSE

1. What to start doing immediately to improve

- Use the revision guide to go over the topic currently being studied and refresh your understanding of any resit modules you may enter.
- Use the revision guide on loan to you, do this on a regular basis, preferably 15 minutes per night. Shorter repeated 'bursts' of learning are better than hours in one go.
- Learn key formulae.
- Look at your copy of the syllabus to understand what you will be tested on.
- 'Additional scientists'; Practise short answer questions on relevant topics on SAM Learning to become familiar with terminal exam style.

2. The difference between a Grade C and a Grade D

So you're on a D and you want to get a C – read the following. You need to do these things routinely to raise your grade:

A 'C' candidate has a good broad knowledge of topics. They describe and explain their answers. They use science specific vocabulary in their answers.

A 'C' candidate knows how to use and manipulate formulae, they can remember equations and formulae to calculate answers and they know the correct units to use.

A 'C' candidate remembers chemical symbols and formulae and can use and produce simple balanced equations.

Where can you get help in school?

- Your teacher will be happy to help you after school at your request – just ask and arrange a time
- GCSE module revision clinic is available as advertised in the department.
- Access www.samlearning.com and BBC Bitesize revision websites to consolidate learning by visiting the library or B27 after school.
- The walls of your lab/noticeboard.
- Summaries of key points.
- Formulae.
- Equations.

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SCIENCE

Where can you get help out of school?

- Public libraries.
- Bitesize revision programmes on the BBC.
- On-line
 - - Sam learning
 - - BBC bitesize
 - - Skool
- Revision guide – you have your loan copy. Read it!
- Workbook – complete and check all outstanding questions in the section for which you are studying.
- Help yourself – create revision resources of your own in styles that help you learn
 - posters
 - concept maps
 - post-it-notes
 - audio recordings
 - PowerPoint presentations
 - notes etc. etc.
 - complete outstanding questions on all topics in your workbook.

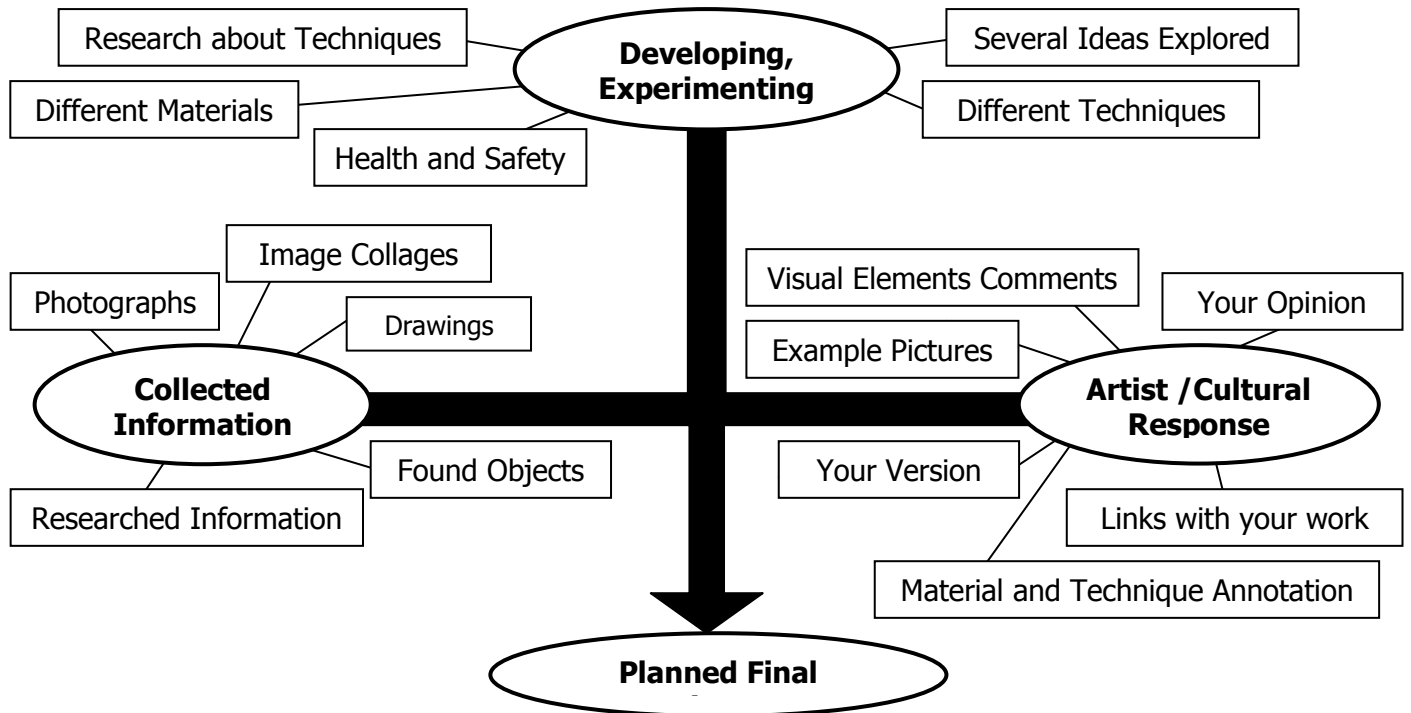
Have fun, experiment.....

ART AND DESIGN DOUBLE GCSE

Examination Board and Syllabus – Edexcel GCSE Applied Art and Design (Double Award)

What to start doing immediately to improve:

- Check your coursework portfolio contains the following:



What is the difference between the grades?

Students who gain a Grade A will have:

- Researched and experimented with a variety of ideas in detail.
- Presented their work professionally.
- Produced an extensive portfolio of work showing skills using a wide range of materials and techniques.
- Evaluated and refined their work throughout.
- Shown a clear understanding on the visual elements.
- Commented in depth on the work of others using keywords.

Students who gain a Grade C will have:

- Researched and experimented with a few ideas.
- Presented their work with care and thought.
- Produced a portfolio of work showing confident use of a range of materials.
- Commented on the work of others using keywords

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ART AND DESIGN DOUBLE GCSE

Students who gain a Grade D may have:

- Researched 1 idea.
- Produced limited work
- Stuck to 1 idea.
- Presented work in a muddled way.
- Used a limited range of materials and techniques.

Where can you get help?

After school clubs on Mondays, Wednesdays or Thursdays.

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DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Examination Board and Syllabus - Graphic Products OCR 1955

1. What to start doing immediately to improve

- Complete all the set coursework. Remember this is 60% of your GCSE.
- Meet the submission deadlines.
- Use the Objective Help Sheets as a check list to make sure you cover all areas.
- Read through your mark sheet and make any necessary amendments to improve each objective.
- Attend the D&T after school sessions to obtain help with coursework.
- Ask for exam questions to work through to gain practice and help with revision.
- Work through the revision guide and work booklet.

2. The difference between a Grade C and a Grade D

Pupils who gain a Grade C:

- Consider both the design need and the intended users and write a clear design brief.
- Collect relevant data and analyse it fully with a conclusion.
- Look at existing products and evaluate them against the needs of the users.
- Write a detailed design specification and consider how production of the product in batches can be controlled.
- Produce a range of appropriate design proposals that are commented on in detail.
- Check design proposals against the design specification and clearly state chosen design.
- Use a range of techniques to present design proposals.
- Carry out trials and tests to make decisions about materials and production methods.
- Produce and evaluate models to make sure that the product meets the design brief.
- Produce a control system which could be used when making a batch of 50 to ensure all products are exactly the same.
- Complete a planning sheet in advance for the making of the final product. This will show the stages of making in a logical order.
- Make a product that is of a good standard and works as intended.
- Carry out relevant tests and write conclusions that suggest any necessary changes to improve the product.
- Comment on their use of time, materials, equipment and production methods.

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DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Where can you get help in school?

- Attend after school sessions.
- Ask Ms Mawdsley
- Look at the exemplar GCSE coursework.

Where can you get help out of school?

- Use your revision guide and work book.
- Internet e.g.
 - www.flyingpig.co.uk
 - www.paperengineering.com
 - www.technologysudent.com
- BBC GCSE Bitesize

FRENCH

Examination Board and Syllabus - A.Q.A. French

1. What to start doing immediately to improve

- Buy a revision guide (£2).
- Learn verb tenses.
- Learn all newly-presented vocabulary.
- Action targets.
- Learn presentation and oral questions based on this.
- Learn oral booklet questions/answers.
- Learn alphabet, times, link words, adjectives, adverbs.

2. The difference between a Grade C and a Grade D

Grade D L'annee derrier je aller au bord de la mer avec mon famille
(mistakes underlined).

Grade C L'annee derriere je suis alle(e) au bord de la mer avec mes parents
et ma soeur. ('etait rigolo mai un peu cher – are of past tense and
opinions).

l'annee prochaire je vais visiter les monuments a Paris,
parce que j'adore l'histoire et ca va etre interessant

use of future and opinions.

Where can you get help in school?

- After-school revision classes next term.
- I.C.T. – websites on display in library.
- Ask to see class teacher for advice/help.

Where can you get help out of school?

- Internet – see website list in library.
- Revision booklet.
- Practice oral questions with member of family (whether or not they speak French).

HISTORY

Examination Board and Syllabus - Edexcel Syllabus B – Modern Syllabus

1. What to start doing immediately to improve

- Revise core content of Paper 1: “Superpower Relations 1945-1990” and “The Rise and fall of Soviet Russia 1928-1990”
- Revise core content of Paper 2: “The war to end all wars 1914-1918” and “Russia in Revolution c. 1910 - 1924”
- Complete all outstanding coursework.
- Use the revision lessons on Wednesdays and Thursdays 2:30pm to 3:30pm.

2. The difference between a Grade C and a Grade D

The main difference between a C grade and D grade is that the student should consistently be reaching high Level 2 marking. This means that through out both papers they write in full sentences and explain their answers fully. For example:

When asked “What is meant by the term Warsaw Pact?”

D Grade Candidate:

“The Warsaw Pact was made in 1955, it was the Russian equivalent to Nato. Russia was worried about an invasion from allied forces.”

This answer has little detail, and offers no explanation. A C grade candidate would organise their answer in to **Paragraphs** and will add an **explanation**.

C Grade Answer:

“The Warsaw Pact was an alliance formed by Russia in 1955. It involved the countries within Russia’s sphere of influence, such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, Albania, Hungary and Bulgaria.

It was formed as a direct response to the Allies forming NATO in 1949. Russia has been invaded twice during the 20th Century, and did not want to be invaded again. Russia was prompted to create her own alliance after West Germany joined Nato in May 1955.”

This answer shows the examiner that the student has not only learnt the course material but they can organise their writing into a coherent structure.

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HISTORY

Students must also read the question! Many candidates lose valuable marks from not noticing key words such as “change” in a question, and will write word perfect answers “describing” an event but not mentioning how it “changed” things.

A grade C student generally has more confidence than a D grade student. If you do not understand a question, or are not sure of the answer, still have a go at it, you might get some marks, but missing it out means you will get no marks. You never know, you could be right.

Remember, the most marks are found on the essay questions. Choose those first. If you can complete the essays and not answer some of the shorter questions in part A, don't worry. Being able to answer the short questions in part A and none of the essays in part B would mean you were losing 25% of your total exam mark.

Where can you get help in school?

- Library has set revise guides and lists of revision websites.
- GCSE student handbook.

Where can you get help out of school?

- www.schoolhistory.co.uk
- Extensive revision topics and links to the majority of revision sites.

HOSPITALITY AND CATERING

Examination Board and Syllabus – WJEC

1. What to start doing immediately to improve

- Know and understand all nutritional information
- Complete all outstanding coursework.
- Use revision games and activities, we do in class, at home to help you remember key facts.

2. Buy some post it notes and stick 5 keywords and meanings around your kitchen. Ask a family member to test your knowledge. The important words are cooking terms eg marinade, en croute.

The difference between a Grade C and a Grade D

Grade C candidates can show clear accurate facts about Hospitality and the Catering Industry. Make sure that you answer the theory questions in the style required . For example a question might ask you to ;-

DEFINE this is to *give the meaning of.....*

LIST to write a list of examples

STATE to write clearly and briefly

DESCRIBE to write an account of.....

These are the higher grade ways to answer questions :-

DISCUSS to give important aspects and the advantages and disadvantages

EXPLAIN to make clear and give reasons

EVALUATE to give important aspects and your own opinion

ASSESS write a wide range of points give evidence.

Where can you get help in school?

- Attend a revision session during study leave (Mrs Gadsden will let you know when)
- Attending every lesson now until leaving date – every lesson is based around the theory of the subject.
- Come to the lesson with a positive attitude

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Examination Board - Edexcel

1. What to start doing immediately to improve

- Extension tasks.
- Ask for extra homework/exam style Q's in areas you find difficult.
- Join extra curricula clubs/extra practice.
- Revise effort grade if applicable.

2. The difference between a Grade C and a Grade D

The difference between a Grade C and a Grade D may be only a few marks overall. A small improvement in all areas is what is needed.

For a Grade C

- Achieve an average of 6/10 for practical sports.
- Achieve an average of 6/10 for Evaluation of Performance.
- Achieve an average of 6/10 for Rules & Regulations.
- Achieve recognised % in written exam paper.
- Achieve 18/30 for Exercise Training Programme project

For a Grade D

- Achieve an average of 5/10 for practical sports.
- Achieve an average of 5/10 for Evaluation of Performance.
- Achieve an average of 5/10 for Rules & Regulations.
- Achieve an average of 18/30 for Exercise Training Project.

Where can you get help in school?

- All P.E. staff.
- Library – homework club.
- Internet via school computers.
- Extra Curricular Activities (details in the published programme).

Where can you get help out of school?

- Local library.
- Internet.
- Local Sports Clubs.
- Seek advice from Sport & Leisure Dept – Hillingdon Borough.
Hillingdon Sports Council – Civic Centre (for advice and info).

Vocational Performing Arts – Specialism in Music Technology

Examination Board - AQA

1. What you start doing straight away:

- Learn how to use equipment.
- Plan a show.
- Visit real work places.
- Go to see live performances and shows.
- Research techniques and people.
- Develop a portfolio.
- Form our business team.

A 'C' grade candidate will:

- Have a basic record of what we have learnt in portfolio.
- Use photos to record what we have done.
- Taken part in the preparation and presenting of a show based on the AQA brief.
- Turn up to most lessons and rehearsals on time.
- Show some evidence of independent research, ideas and planning.

An 'A' grade candidate will:

- Have detailed records of what we have learnt, showing how their skills have developed and evaluate their peers and themselves.
- Have annotated photos of work.
- Take an active role in the preparation and presenting of a show based on the AQA brief.
- Turn up to all lessons and rehearsals on time.
- Show evidence of independent research, ideas, planning and inspirations and how that has helped them with their own work.

Where can you get help in school?

- Music club, Wednesday H8 2.30-3.30p.m.
- Library, selection of Music Tech books
Computers H8, Software includes: Cuebase, Audacity and Sibelius.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Examination Board and Syllabus - Edexcel GCSE short Course Specification A

1. What to start doing immediately to improve

- Pupils have been given a booklet for the year. Study this carefully and act upon the suggestions given.
- When moral problems arise in the news, read articles in the newspapers. This will help you understand the various points of view.
- Use every opportunity to discuss moral issues.

2. The difference between a Grade D and a Grade C

Grade C Candidates

- Use of English carefully and correctly, and also specialist vocabulary.
- Have covered at a reasonable depth, the major areas of the syllabus which have been taught.
- Provide evidence to support the cases being made.
- Show the ability to interpret and evaluate different means.

Grade D Candidates

- Often lose crucial marks for unsatisfactory use of English.
- Do not sufficiently focus the knowledge they have to answering examination questions.
- Do not tend to use specialist terms.
- Often have weak areas in subject knowledge.

Where can you get help in school?

- Use the booklet provided as the major source.
- Extra help is available after school, by appointment, when needed.
- Books can be borrowed from the RE department.
- Read the newspaper articles on the RE department noticeboard.

Where can you get help out of school?

- Commercial Study Guides have been produced. Please see the RE department for advice.
- The following websites are useful:
 - BBC Learning (available in school)
 - BBC Bitesize Religious Education
 - Culham Sites and Resources www.culham.info