

10 tips for avoiding common pitfalls in your GCSE Maths exams:

1. There are lots of questions on the paper, if you can't do one don't panic.
2. Check if your answer is realistic. Can a second hand car cost £7 million? Does the earth weigh 4kg? If the answer doesn't seem right you could've made a simple error.
3. If you've spent more than 5 minutes on a question, leave it and come back. As a rough guide, think about "one mark per minute", though don't obsessively worry about the clock.
4. If you can't do part of a question, check the other parts before moving on. Parts are usually independent, so if you can't answer (a) you might be able to do (b).
5. Re-read the question after you've answered it and check you've done all that was asked. You'd be surprised how many students do lots of credit worthy work, but calculate an area when a perimeter was asked for, or give an answer in cm when the question wanted metres.
6. If you're stuck, just think about the maths that might be relevant and write something down. Identifying the key information in the question can help. In questions worth multiple marks, early marks can be scored for relatively simple steps, like rearranging an equation.
7. Make sure you clearly cross through any work you don't want marked. If there are two solutions, one right and one wrong, the examiner might not be able to give you full credit.
8. Try to organise your working out so you can follow it. This will help the examiner find work worthy of credit and also makes it easier for you to check your work later on.
9. For the calculator paper(s), use a calculator you are familiar with, and know the functions.
10. Use all the time you have. When you've finished, go through the paper and check all your work. Even if you cannot complete a question, you may pick up some marks for making a start.