

Past Paper Practice

Years 7–12 | Highest-Value Study Strategy

WHAT IS PAST PAPER PRACTICE?

Past paper practice means completing real past exam questions under conditions as close to the exam as possible. This includes timed conditions, working in silence, using only permitted materials, and reviewing your answers critically against marking criteria.

WHY DOES IT WORK? THE PSYCHOLOGY

- It builds "exam fluency" — the ability to perform under pressure, not just recall information.
- Exposure to real question formats reduces test anxiety by familiarising you with what to expect.
- The act of attempting and then reviewing mistakes is one of the highest-value learning cycles.
- Identifying question types and examiner expectations shapes how you prepare future topics.

"The best way to prepare for an exam is to do the exam — then learn from what you got wrong."

HOW TO USE PAST PAPERS EFFECTIVELY

- Simulate exam conditions: no notes, timed, quiet environment.
- Mark your own work using the official marking guidelines immediately after.
- Categorise every error — concept gap, careless mistake, timing issue, or misread question.
- For each wrong answer, write the correct response in full — not just tick and move on.

PAST PAPER REVIEW LOG

Paper attempted (e.g. 2023 HSC English Paper 1):

Date completed:

Time taken:

Question / Section	Marks Lost — Reason & Fix

Score: ____ / ____ Percentage:

Top 3 things to revise before the next paper:

Remember

Always work from the most recent past papers first — examiners' preferences shift over time and the latest papers best reflect current expectations.