



Year 11 Special Edition

A new venture for 2004 and 2005

We are constantly looking for ways to improve our students' performance in exams. We firmly believe that their success depends on a three way partnership – between the student, their teachers, and their family.

We are never quite sure if parents know exactly what Year 11 students need to do during their final year at school, so we thought we would send out a termly newsletter specifically about the final GCSE year. This first issue aims to give you a flavour of the coming months.

We hope the information will be useful, and we will give more in our next exams newsletter, issued with Year 11 reports in January 2005.

September

Students return and enter their final year of compulsory education. We emphasise the need for a positive approach, a freshness and renewed interest in study after the long holiday. Continued adherence to school rules, good behaviour and positive effort are required.

Staff analyse the summer exam results, looking for patterns and experience which can be passed on to the current year group.

October

Students are back in the full swing of school life, with the new timetable and homework routines established. In Year 11 homework is often more flexible than earlier years – larger pieces of work set over longer periods of time, rather than short pieces on a particular night. This requires more organisation for students – they need to avoid the temptation to leave things to the last minute. We provide student planners to help.

Jargon buster: Student Planner

The diary provided free to all students to record their work commitments and plan their time. An important document. Use is compulsory. It is not a scrap-book.

Students will get some homework over the half term holiday, though no more than might be given on a normal weekend. It is a very good opportunity to catch up on any coursework and even get ahead.

November

Interim coursework deadlines continue to appear. It is vital that students produce high quality coursework—they have more control over quality and content than in the final exam, and therefore coursework should always enhance their performance. If it doesn't it is likely to be a reflection of lack of effort and not taking advice rather than lack of ability.

Jargon buster: Coursework:

Project or practical work undertaken during the two-year GCSE course, assessed in school and then moderated by the exam board. Its style content and form vary from subject to subject. We produce a guide—see below.

Interim coursework deadlines

Those set by the school during the year to check on progress and allow marking. Exam boards set deadlines for final submission of work.

Coursework can be a major source of pressure for students. We hope that parents will encourage and help them with their planning for these pieces of work. Guidelines on acceptable levels of help are issued in each subject.

Some examples:

English should all be complete by the end of term.
Maths and Science will complete a 2nd project this half term, in lesson time and homework.
ICT and History will have their first piece completed by October half term. ICT has now moved on to the second project (virtually every lesson is used for coursework).
Citizenship has a second piece to complete by 7/12/04
Art and technology subjects are working continuously on project work.
PE (GCSE) practical work is assessed continuously.
If in doubt about coursework progress, let us know.

A guide to coursework was issued to all students at the beginning of Year 10, and re-issued in Year 11
It is a 10 page A5 booklet giving details of the percentage value of final grade attributed to coursework, brief descriptions of the work, timing, and key deadlines.

We do have a few spare if you cannot find a copy.

MALTON SCHOOL



GCSE COURSEWORK
2003-5
YEAR 10

November continued— Modular exams.

60 students will be sitting exams in Science on the morning of 18 November, either as re-sits to boost grades, or catching up on earlier absences.

Maths Sets P and Q will be sitting two modular exams on 17 November, one in the morning, one in the afternoon.

Revision is required to prepare for these exams.

Jargon buster: Modular exams

Taken during Year 10 and/or Year 11, on specific sections of the course. Externally marked by the exam board. A re-sit is possible at another session—arranged in discussion with the teacher.

December MOCK EXAMS

Mock exams this year have been moved to the second week in December – previously they have been after Christmas. We hope this will allow students a genuine break from intensive study over the holiday, in order that they can return refreshed in January for the “home straight”.

Mock exams are extremely important – they are the last major assessment before the end of Year 11, and final reports are written based on the results achieved. Grades achieved in these exams form the basis of applications for Sixth Form, college, or employment. Genuine revision is required – we sometimes hear students who receive low marks making the excuse “I didn’t really revise” as if this is alright. It isn’t.

Jargon buster: Mock exams

GCSE exam papers are given, as close as is possible at this stage to the real thing in style and content. They are marked by staff according to exam board mark schemes.

A separate revision guide is issued, giving general advice and information on how best to prepare. . Parents should be aware that all subjects issue clear printed guides two weeks prior to the exams which tell students what their papers are, how long, what level, what the content is, and tips on how to prepare. All receive a printed timetable for the exam period.

Because exams vary in length across subjects, to slot them into the school day students may sometimes have time in the exam room before their exam starts. There may also be times free between exams. These are perfect opportunities for final revision – yet we have seen students arrive without revision material for these periods. Please help them use their timetables to plan the best use of their time.

Christmas Holiday

We hope this will be a genuinely refreshing holiday for students who will have worked hard during the term, and deserve a well-earned rest from study.

Staff will not be setting work over this period.

January

Into the year of the GCSE exams

In return for the holiday, we expect 100% commitment to all courses on return. Staff will be finishing their mock exam marking, analysing performance, then returning scripts to students. Feedback is always given on how to improve grades, and this should be noted and acted upon. Students should file their mock papers away for future reference - you can learn as much from mistakes as from correct answers.

Year 11 reports are issued at the end of January – they will contain advice on how to improve, and targets will be set. They will provide a guide to realistic potential for summer performance.

The second of these exam news bulletins will be published, to take you through the next few busy months up to just after Easter.

An information evening for prospective Sixth Form students is planned for 1 February. Anyone considering A-level study (plus their parents) should attend to gather information about courses on offer. Further details will be given nearer the date.

Brief notes on February and beyond - more in the January bulletin.

February and March A very short half term and very early Easter. Coming up to coursework deadlines pressure inevitably mounts. We will contact parents to let you know about progress on coursework

April and May All subjects will now be approaching a period of revision. Course content will all have been covered by the end of April, and review and exam preparation will become the focus of lessons. These weeks are the most critical in terms of boosting performance, and we urge parents to encourage full attendance and effort.

May and June The exams arrive, thick and fast! Revision sessions will continue during exams, though normal timetable is suspended mid-May as exams begin.

Any use?

Please let us know your views on this newsletter. What else would you like included?

Do contact Mr Steel or Mrs Smith with any concerns about individual students, on 692828

