



Dear Parent/Carer/Pupil

At Portlethen Academy we want every young person to do their very best and for them to get the best exam results they can and as wide a range of skills as possible to take into life after school. The job and further study situation is hugely competitive and the better results a young person has the better chance they stand of success. This leaflet captures advice from our recent senior pupils and staff on how to achieve the best possible results in exams based on their experience. We feel the advice from pupils who have just experienced S4, S5 or S6 is hugely valuable and, if followed, can raise attainment for any young person.

What our S5 pupils said about S4 and studying for National Exams

What we found difficult

- The number of assessments
- Increased work at home
- The pace of the year
- Exam Preparation
- Making sacrifices

Study Methods that worked

- Past Papers
- Flash Cards
- Mind Maps
- Writing out notes
- Using study guides
- You can't start too early
- Find the study method that work for you (these worked for us but not necessarily your kids)
- Try various methods before it gets critical

What Helped Us Succeed

- Effective study plans
- Teacher feedback / advice
- Attending revision classes
- Other activities
- Listening to music
- Having a social life
- TEA AND COFFEE!

What our S6 pupils said about S5 and studying for Higher Exams

What's the difference between N5 and Higher?

- More challenging: although higher uses N5 as a basis of knowledge, higher requires a much deeper level of understanding. An A at N5 does not guarantee that an A will also be achieved at Higher.
- More self-taught: If you miss classes you are expected to arrange a time with teachers to catch up on the work. Keeping up with homework and missed school work is the student's responsibility as is going to after school classes to get help with things you don't understand.
- Structure questions: Exam questions require more work for the marks and it is important to understand the depth you need to go into before sitting any exams.

What Higher students found hard

- Time management
- Focusing on work
- Studying early

Sacrifices

- Time: Good grades aren't achieved without **sacrificing free time** and effort on revision.
- Commitments: sometimes you may need to priorities and put your school work before part time jobs, volunteering, time with friends (etc.)
- Short term pain(hard work) for lifelong gain

What pupils can do

- Ask for help if you don't understand. Teachers are more than happy to help students and lunch time/ after school tutorials are available for all subjects.
- Organisation and time management: Making study timetables and sticking to them is very important especially as prelims and exams draw closer. Keeping organised and ensuring you know when assessments are being held will also help you stay on top of work.

What parents can do to help

- Past papers online or Hodder Gibson (Associated with the SQA)
- Get them for every subject
- Help booklets: 'How to pass...' or 'Bright Red'
- Help your child set high but reasonable expectations
- Keeping working environments free from distractions

Further Advice

- Make sure you understand the whole course (information is available on the SQA website)
- Focus revision on what you don't know
- Aim high in prelims: don't waste that opportunity because the more you work in prelims the easier the final exam will be.

The advice our staff gives to pupils

- Start working and revising NOW, prelims and exams come round fast
- Complete homework
- Complete classwork
- Catch up anything you miss
- Read over the day's work and ensure you understand it
- Ask if you didn't understand
- Be clear what the entry requirements are for the next level in school and work towards them
- Be clear what the entry levels are for your chosen job, college or university course and work to exceed that as these are getting higher all the time. *Beware Minimum Requirements*

The Iceberg Illusion

Success is an iceberg



WHAT PEOPLE SEE

Persistence



Failure



Sacrifice



Disappointment



WHAT PEOPLE DON'T SEE

Dedication



Hard work



Good habits



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