

PERFECTING EXAM TECHNIQUE

STUDENT GUIDE

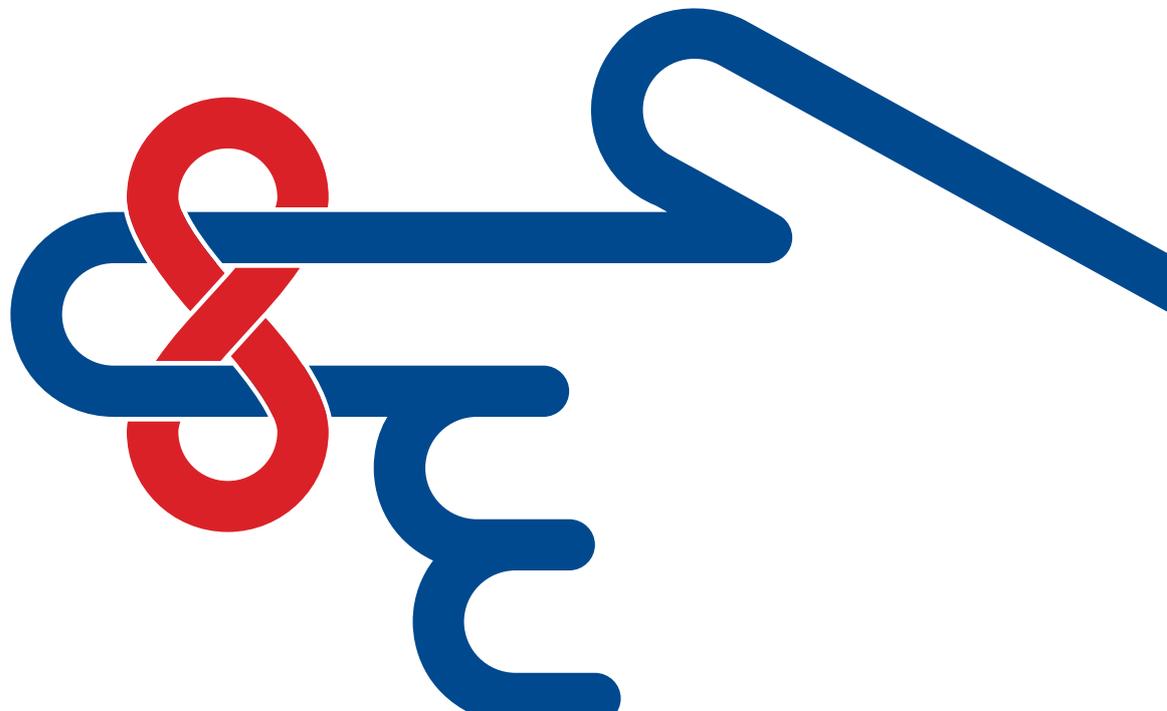
AQA GCSE BUSINESS (9-1) EXAM ESSENTIALS

A reminder about the papers:

- ✓ You will sit two papers
- ✓ Paper 1 assesses “Influences of operations and HRM on business activity” – 3.1 Business in the Real World; 3.2 Influences on Business; 3.3 Business Operations & 3.4 Human Resources
- ✓ Paper 2 assesses “Influences of marketing and finance on business activity” - 3.1 Business in the Real World; 3.2 Influences on Business; 3.5 Marketing; 3.6 Finance
- ✓ Each paper is worth 50% of the total GCSE marks
- ✓ Each paper is 1 ¾ hours long and is worth 90 marks; this equates to a minute a mark and 15 minutes reading time of the “Items”
- ✓ Both papers are very similar in structure and will have three sections:

Section A	No extract	20 marks
Section B	Case study: Item A and Item B	Approx 34 marks
Section A	Case study: Item C, D and possibly E	Approx 36 marks

- ✓ Questions will consist of a mixture of MCQs, calculation, short answer and extended response





Top tips for success in the exam:

A reminder about the papers:

- ✓ Manage your time effectively – roughly a minute a mark! This gives you 15 minutes to read each question carefully, plan your response – especially the 12 mark response and read each Item carefully
- ✓ One way of managing your time easily is to break up the paper into chunks of time and think:
 - ✓ after 20 mins, I should have finished all of Section A where there is no Item or case
 - ✓ after 60 mins or 1 hour, as well as Section A, I should have now finished all of Section B that relates to the first case study i.e. Items A and B; this will give you 40 minutes to complete section B
 - ✓ which leaves the last 45 minutes to complete Section C that relates to the second case study i.e. Items C, D and possibly E; this will take you to the end of the paper
- ✓ Read every question twice – just to ensure that you answer the question that is specifically asked and not a different question!
- ✓ Don't forget that Section A is not looking for any context; it is important to look at the marks available for each question and ensure a **full enough** explanation is given in each answer every time
- ✓ Read the case studies or “Items” very carefully in Section B and Section C. Remember the case studies will be split into different Items. To move up the mark scheme, answers must be written in context; context can only be awarded if you have read the case study, so take your time reading each Item to ensure that you fully understand it!
- ✓ Remember...mentioning the name of the business or something that is found in the question is not enough for context to be awarded - **your answer has to be embedded in the case!** This means talk about the business in your answer, but don't just copy bits from the case word for word; use the case study or Item to help support your answer!
- ✓ Remember in “Analyse”, “Recommend” and “Analyse/Evaluate” questions – you need to include points that are **fully analysed** to reach the highest levels; this involves using connectives and explaining the effect/impact of your point in context
- ✓ Always finish the paper
- ✓ Never leave a question blank
- ✓ Learn all the content and the key terms in the specification carefully – you need to therefore use the specification as part of your revision!
- ✓ Learn all the formulae – formulae will not be given in the exam!

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TYPE OF QUESTIONS

REMEMBER THE STYLE OF BOTH EXAM PAPERS WILL BE VERY SIMILAR

“MCQs”, “Complete the table” and “Identify” – 1 mark questions

- Points based marking – 1 mark per relevant point
- **MCQs** will be found in Section A only
- **“Complete the table”** found in any section (more than one figure may be required, which would mean the response would be worth more than one mark)
- **“Identify”** can appear in any section, but usually Sections A and B

Command word	Question example	How to answer?
MCQ	<p>01.5 Which of the following is an example of an industry in the primary sector</p> <p>A Distribution <input type="radio"/></p> <p>B Construction <input type="radio"/></p> <p>C Mining <input type="radio"/></p> <p>D Tourism <input type="radio"/></p>	<p>MCQs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Select the correct response and ensure the circle is completely filled in alongside the appropriate answer✓ If you change your mind, cross out the original answer and completely fill in the circle next to the answer you now wish to choose✓ If you do change your mind, refer back to the instructions at the start of Section A to ensure you are following them precisely; the key is to make sure your answer is clear
Complete the table	<p>“Complete the table and calculate the increase in total costs of producing one Portakabin next year compared to this year”</p>	<p>Complete the table:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Ensure the figures are clear and are entered in the appropriate box(es) in the table✓ Read the question carefully; if two figures are asked for then ensure that two figures are included✓ Be prepared: this type of question may be part of a hybrid question i.e. the question may involve a further calculation to reach full marks; in the question given (worth 3 marks) two marks would be awarded for completing the table and showing the correct method of the calculation; a further mark would be awarded for the final calculation of the increase in total costs
Identify	<p>“Identify one benefit and one drawback to a business of using just in time production”</p> <p>OR</p> <p>“Identify two benefits to the Shepherd Group Ltd of being a private limited company”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ One or two points should be clearly stated or identified, dependent on the question✓ Don't forget context in Sections B and C; if the point would not be appropriate to the business in the Item, the mark(s) will not be awarded✓ Don't over answer – a lengthy paragraph will just waste time and gain no extra marks; a few words will usually be sufficient to gain all the mark(s) available

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TYPE OF QUESTION

“Calculate” – 2/3/5 mark questions

- Points based marking
- “**Calculate**” questions can be found in any section of the exam paper and vary in terms of the marks allocated
- Read each question carefully in terms of what is **exactly** required to gain full marks

Command word	Question example	How to answer?
Calculate – 2 marks	“Using Figure 1, calculate the total revenue made by the cafe between weeks 1-4, assuming its average selling price is £5. Show your workings”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Best practice would be to write the formula in order to focus your mind on the calculation required; there are however no marks available for the formula in this type of low marked calculation question✓ Show all LABELLED workings to the calculation; ensure the final answer can be clearly seen by the examiner
Calculate – 3 marks	“Employees receive a 10% discount on their shopping at Tesco stores. Calculate the weekly benefit to an employee who on average spends £14 each weekday and £22 on each day at the weekend”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Remember to include £ signs or units etc appropriate to the question set✓ Always attempt a calculation question; work methodically to reach the answer; but don’t spend too long on a calculate question to the detriment of other questions
Calculate – 5 marks	“Calculate the average rate of return to easyJet of buying the 5 airplanes. State the formula used and show all your workings. Give your answer to two decimal places”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Read the question carefully; it asks for the formula, all of the workings given plus the answer given to two decimal places; ensure that all of these requirements are met✓ Start off by writing the formula; there is usually a space provided in the exam paper where the formula can be written✓ Label all workings clearly; it is a huge risk if all workings are completed on the calculator without being written on the actual exam paper; zero marks will be awarded if the final answer is incorrect, no formula or workings are shown✓ Ensure the final answer is written clearly and the correct units, £ etc is given

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TYPE OF QUESTION

Command word	Question example	How to answer?
Calculate – 5 marks Cont.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Ensure that 2 decimal places are included in your response; practise rounding!✓ Remember, even if the correct answer is given, but the formula is missed, full marks will not be awarded, as the question clearly requires that the formula is stated, which is worth one mark✓ Do not spend too long on a calculation question to the detriment of the rest of the paper, as it is vital that all questions are attempted✓ But, always attempt every calculation question; even if the final answer stated is incorrect, marks can still be allocated for workings!



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TYPE OF QUESTION

“Explain” – 2/3/4 mark questions

- “**Explain**” questions can be found in any section of the exam paper and will vary in marks
- 2-3 mark “**Explain**” questions will be examined via a points based system
- Most “**Explain**” questions found in Sections B and C will be marked via a levels of response grid

Command word	Question example	How to answer?
Explain – 2 marks	<p>“Explain one personal characteristic of a successful entrepreneur”</p> <p>OR</p> <p>“Explain how being ethical may benefit a business”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Include only one point that answers the specific question set ✓ The question usually asks for just one point, but not always; be guided by the number of marks that are available to ensure that you answer the question in the most appropriate way i.e. 2 marks – point with a short explanation ✓ No context is required for a 2 mark Section A “Explain” question; however, if this type of question is found in Sections B or C, then context should be given ✓ The point given should be explained using one connective such as “this means that...” “therefore...” “as a result...” “in turn ...” <p>E.g. An entrepreneur will be a calculated risk-taker (1), as he/she will risk his/her own money investing and setting up a business venture. If the business idea is successful, the entrepreneur will gain the rewards. (1)</p>
Explain – 3 marks	<p>“Explain one way that introducing lean production techniques could decrease the costs of a business”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Include only one point that answers the specific question set ✓ No context is required if this type of question is found in Section A ✓ The point given should be explained using two steps in the chain of argument; if it is found in Sections B or C, then the answer should be clearly linked to the Item or written in context ✓ Using connectives x 2 such as “this means that...” “therefore...” “as a result...” “in turn ...” will help you to achieve full marks in this type of question <p>E.g. If a business uses just in time stock control (1) it will reduce the amount of space that is required to hold stock (1). This means the business will incur lower costs for warehousing and insurance that would be associated with holding excess or buffer stock (1).</p>

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TYPE OF QUESTION

Command word	Question example	How to answer?
Explain – 4 marks	“Explain two benefits to a business of training its workforce.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Often found in Section A of the paper; therefore no context would be required✓ Follow the same principles as the 2 mark “Explain” question i.e. give a relevant point, followed by a short explanation of that point with one connective; this must be done twice!✓ The points must be distinct from each other and remember two points must be given
Explain – 4 marks	“Explain why easyJet has chosen to open easyHotels in many city centres, with very cheap prices starting from £19 a night”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ If “Explain” questions are found in Sections B and/or C remember context is vital in order to gain the top level of the mark scheme✓ Questions usually ask for one or a benefit, effect, drawback etc✓ Include one point, ideally taken from the Item and explain this point in a chain of argument using connectives x 3 e.g. “this means that...” “therefore...” “as a result...” “in turn ...”✓ The key to success is answering the specific question set, ensuring that the explanation is relevant to the business in the case study✓ If the question does not specifically ask for one point, two can be given, but more than 2 points should never be given in a response <p>E.g. The use of the £19 means that the hotels will attract publicity, (L1) which will result in the rooms being continually booked, as they will become well known. (L1) This will mean that the investment in building the hotels can be paid back quickly, (L2) because of the high levels of revenue easyHotel will receive due to the high occupancy rates. (L2)</p>

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TYPE OF QUESTION

“Analyse” – 6 mark questions

- “**Analyse**” questions will appear in Sections B and C
- A levels of response marking grid will be used containing 3 levels
- The examiner is looking for detailed or “full” analysis to reach Level 3 of the mark scheme
- Context is extremely important; all 3 levels of the mark scheme refer to context
- A variety of “**Analyse**” questions will be found in the exams e.g. “Analyse how effective...”, “Analyse one benefit...”, “Analyse the drawback...”
- Despite the question, only **ONE POINT** is required. **NEVER INCLUDE MORE THAN ONE POINT IN A RESPONSE** otherwise the answer given may become a series of listed points, which will not demonstrate the skills of analysis and **NOT** answer the question

Command word	Question example	How to answer?
Analyse	<p>“Analyse one effect of Trendy Teens using e-commerce and m-commerce to sell its jumpers”</p> <p>OR</p> <p>“EasyJet sells its tickets through the internet direct to the customer, rather than using traditional distribution methods through travel agents. Analyse the benefit to easyJet of selling direct to its customers.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ No definition✓ Maximum ONE point explained with at least 3-4 steps in the chain of argument✓ The point should be taken from the Item, to ensure the answer is in context from the start✓ The chain of argument should refer to the context throughout and demonstrate a logical chain of argument, with no missed “steps” <p>E.g. Using e-commerce and m-commerce will mean that Trendy Teens’ teenage customers will be able to view the products easily, as this age group use mobile phones and technology a great deal. (Level 1) This means that Trendy Teens’ products will be seen by a huge number of their target market, who would be keen to wear the firm’s jumpers due to the recent publicity involving a pop group. (Level 2) This would increase the firm’s sales dramatically, as they would be able to access and buy these products regardless of where they lived. This would therefore increase Trendy Teens’ revenue and, if they could control the costs of distribution and other costs, also its profitability. (Level 3)</p>

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TYPE OF QUESTION

“Recommend” or “Advise” – 9 mark questions

- “Recommend” or “Advise” questions will be found in both Section B and Section C
- “Recommend” or “Advise” questions sometimes involve two options, but not always
- Assesses application, analysis and **evaluation**; a judgement is therefore required
- Levels of response marking with 3 levels; the level that “best fits” the answer **as a whole** will be awarded
- If there are figures included in the question, ensure they are referred to and used within your response; figures are included in the Item and the question for a reason – the best candidates will always use them! Be aware AQA will increasingly use figures in the 9 mark question!
- The examiner is looking for:
 - An answer that is written fully in context and shows accurate knowledge and understanding of business concepts
 - Detailed chains of argument across a maximum of two points . Figures should be manipulated by conducting relevant calculations, such as %’s or % changes, to support your analysis/chain of argument(s)
 - A clearly justified, thorough judgement that is answering the question set

Command word	Question example	How to answer?
Recommend	<p>“Amit and Chloe have noticed that sales of the style of jumpers that sold very well in the first two years are now declining. They now have an important decision to make:</p> <p>- Chloe believes that they should use product extension strategies in order to sell their remaining stock of jumpers</p> <p>-Amit believes they should forget about the existing stock and launch a new range of jumpers as soon as possible.</p> <p>Recommend to Amit and Chloe which would be the better option for them to take. Give reasons for your advice”</p>	<p>No definition</p> <p>Structure your answer as follows:</p> <p>Paragraph 1: Pro of first option explained with connectives in CONTEXT</p> <p>On one hand using product extension strategies would be good because.....which means and therefore</p> <p>Paragraph 2: Pro of second option explained with connectives in CONTEXT</p> <p>On the other hand launching a new range of jumpers would be good because..... which means and therefore...</p> <p>Paragraph 3: Conclusion</p> <p>Overall I think:</p> <p>(w) – choose which one EITHER THE PRODUCT EXTENSION STRATEGIES OR LAUNCHING A NEW RANGE OF JUMPERS</p> <p>(w) – why have you chosen that option. Use the phrasing “Not only would it be good because ... refer back to the +ve point you have referred to in your earlier paragraph, but also it is good because (additional evidence to support your judgement IN CONTEXT)</p> <p>(w) – why is it better than the alternative you have rejected... (think about the situation of the business, its finances, its aims)</p>

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TYPE OF QUESTION

Command word	Question example	How to answer?
Recommend Cont.		Remember to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Embed your answer in the Item throughout – this is crucial!✓ Convince the examiner your judgement/choice is correct for the business; write a nice, detailed chunky paragraph here!
Recommend	“Recommend whether Portakabin should continue to invest in health and safety training for its new and existing employees. Give reasons for your advice.”	<p>Paragraph 1: Pro of the idea in the question explained with connectives in context</p> <p>On one hand continuing to invest in health and safety would be good for Portakabin because..... which means and therefore</p> <p>Paragraph 2: Con of the idea in the question explained with connectives in context</p> <p>On the other continuing to invest in health and safety would not be good for Portakabin because..... which means and therefore</p> <p>Paragraph 3: Conclusion</p> <p>Overall I think:</p> <p>(w) – make a decision whether it is a good idea or not</p> <p>(w) – why have you chosen that option. Use the phrasing “Not only would it be the best idea for Portakabin because... <i>refer back to the point you have referred to in your earlier paragraph</i>, but also it is better because (additional evidence to support your judgement IN CONTEXT)</p> <p>(w) – why is it better than the alternative you have rejected... (think about the situation of the business, its finances, its aims)</p>

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TYPE OF QUESTION

“Analyse and Evaluate” – 12 mark question

- There will be one 12 mark question in each paper found in Section C only; it will always be the last question on the paper
- **“Analyse and Evaluate”** questions assess all the assessment objectives: **knowledge & understanding, application, analysis and evaluation**
- **The interdependent nature of business i.e. how different functional areas relate together is crucial to the 12 mark question**
- The question will always have two bullet points that need to form the basis of the argument in the first two paragraphs of the answer
- Levels of response marking with 4 levels; the level that “best fits” the answer will be awarded
- The examiner is looking for:
 - Accurate use of key terms; thorough knowledge and understanding of business which draws together different functional areas of business
 - An answer that relates to the Item
 - Detailed chains of argument in context. There should be at least 3-4 steps in the chain of argument
 - A detailed, valid and well supported judgement that is answering the question set and weighs up the information provided in the Item i.e. an answer that compares the relative importance of both points or brings in another functional area

Command word	Question example	How to answer?
Evaluate	<p>“Analyse the impact on easyJet’s performance of recent external events. You should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotional policies - Economic considerations <p>You must evaluate which of these areas will have the biggest impact. Use evidence to support your answer”</p>	<p>✓ Start your answer with one short definition from the question, but this must be brief! Knowledge and understanding can be demonstrated throughout the answer, as it progresses</p> <p>Structure your answer as follows:</p> <p>Paragraph 1: Argument referring to the first bullet point i.e. how easyJet’s performance has been impacted by promotion – explained using connectives and key terms. Links should be made to other functional areas explicitly</p> <p>On one hand easyJet’s performance has been impacted by its promotional policies because..... (Point taken from the Item) which means and therefore the impact on the functional area of will be resulting in.... and therefore... and as a consequence...</p>

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TYPE OF QUESTION

Command word	Question example	How to answer?
Evaluate Cont.		<p>Paragraph 2: Argument referring to the second bullet point i.e. how easyJet's performance has been impacted by economic considerations – explained using connectives and key terms. Links should be made to other functional areas explicitly</p> <p>On the other hand easyJet's performance has been impacted by economic factors such as... because (Point 2 taken from the Item) which means that... and therefore the impact on the functional area of will be which in turn means and therefore....</p> <p>Paragraph 3: Conclusion - AJIM</p> <p>Overall I think:</p> <p>(A) – Answer the question; avoid sitting on the fence – decide on the area which you believe will be most impacted</p> <p>(J) – Justify this decision; refer back to your prior argument and bring in additional evidence to support your judgement by linking different functional areas together and comparing the relative importance of one area against the other. This is absolutely crucial in order to achieve level 4 in your response</p> <p>(I) – “It depends” on factor; does your judgement depend upon anything? If so include it here and explain why; alternatively will the judgement differ in the short-term/long-term in relation to the area that will be most impacted – again if you think so, explain why; remember to try and integrate/link different functional areas together</p> <p>(M) - Explain the most important reason why you have come to this judgement; this may include reasons why an alternative argument has been rejected (think carefully about the situation of the business, its finances, its aims when making this decision); ensure the data in the case is weighed up in terms of importance and reference is continually made to different functional areas</p>

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TYPE OF QUESTION

Command word	Question example	How to answer?
Evaluate Cont.		<p>Remember to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Embed your answer in the context throughout✓ Convince the examiner your judgement/choice is correct for the business; write a nice, detailed chunky conclusion clearly answering the question set✓ Ensure you weigh up the data in the Item in terms of which area will be impacted the most and link together different functional areas; ideally refer to and make links to more than the two areas that are listed in the question

