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Common mistakes made in economics examinations

Candidates are advised to avoid the following mistakes in writing their examination papers so as to score high marks.

1. **Failure to interpret *the question*** No marks are awarded to irrelevantly answered question. **Correct interpretation of economics Questions can be improved by revising all or as much of the suggested revision question papers below**
2. **Poor communication** (*language problem*). More often, students fail to put across their arguments because of weak communication skills. Common errors here include:
 - (a) Grammatical errors for example use of wrong tenses and poor phrasing of points
 - (b) Spelling mistakes making it difficult to comprehend the work of candidates. Candidates are penalized whenever they fail to spell correctly the technical words for example the word infrastructures, entrepreneurship and so on.
 - (c) Incomplete sentences (hanging statements and phrases). This makes the work of the candidate sketchy and in most cases meaningless for example no marks are awarded to incomplete definitions.
 - (d) Strongly worded expressions which are absolute yet unrealistic. For example 'to stop completely', "do not have at all", etc.
 - (e) Use of unique abbreviations. Only conventional abbreviations are not penalized
 - (f) Use of 'slangs' in essay writing for example 'biz bs'

Spellings and writing skills can be improved by writing and rewriting note, questions and answers

2. **Poor handwriting.** This makes the work of candidates to lack the flow of content and thus nothing good is conceived out of it. Poor handwriting also implies that all technical words are misspelled. It also leads to loss of flow of interpretation thus no communication is made.

Good handwriting can be achieved consciously coping and practicing good handwriting

3. **Poor choice of questions.** This is due to:
 - (a) Poor preparation
 - (b) Lack of subject content

- (c) Having vague knowledge of all questions
- (d) Looking at questions at the surface without critically analyzing it

This call for continuous revision; memorizing should be accompanied by noting down point; write down every day and always

4. *Lack of optimization (insufficient points)*. This is due to the following:

- (a) Having no plan for the answers to the question and where there is one, it not followed
- (b) Lack of concentration during the course of the examination
- (c) Doing work in a hurry
- (d) Working without focus due to lack of seriousness
- (e) Points noted down are as a result of rote learning ('cram work')
- (1) Weak mastery of concepts

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5. **Poor illustrations.** These include wrong examples, incomplete diagrams, irrelevant statistical data, wrong graphs and curves, etc. It is clearly stated in the instructions that credit is only given to relevant illustrations. Graphical illustrations must be well labeled and drawn to concepts.

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6. **Lack of originality in presentation.** This is manifested in essays with no clear explanations of the points, use of similar phrasing for all points, presentation that shows inadequate research and above all, essays that portray rote learning.

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7. **Lack of consistence.** An essay which is not consistent is one which lacks flow of presentation.

The points are scanty, weak in content and trivial. The essays are such that each point does not have the same strength and depth of analysis as the other.

Usually, such students explain fully the first point, mention or state fully the second and third point and in a sketchy form outline the rest of the points.

Strong traditional points should be presented first and all point should be explained in an organized way with good illustrations. Keep on writing and rewriting answers for essay question, do not assume you know. Never get tired to write down point during every revision.

8. Untidy work; work with a lot of crossing and all sorts of deletion. Such work is difficult to follow and the content is confused. This leads to loss of marks.

It is usually a result of lack of content which calls for constant revision while writing down

9. Poor time management leading to failure to complete the necessary question

Avoid putting too much emphasis on triviality and panic during the examination.

How to score high marks in economic examination

A systematic presentation is definitely what an examiner wants.

- (a) Read the instruction carefully and internalize the depth of answer required for given question from the instruction. Differentiate those questions that require stating, explanation and discussion and answer relevantly
- (b) Answer starting with easy questions first.
- (c) Use paragraphs even if the point is one word in both sections. Do not outline points
- (d) Make sure that each sentence written down is clear enough to yield marks-otherwise why write it!
- (e) Ensure that your point is made within the first line of your paragraph- do not hide it.
- (f) Write strong and traditional points first and while writing, consider the tense and key words used in the questions. Candidates should also take note of applicability of certain points in relation to the state of the economy or reigning government policies and the programs. For instance, questions like what should government do to and what has the government done to... may require the following point but argued differently.
- (g) Optimize the work by putting down all possible points to the question. Points should correlate with the marks a candidate supposed to score.
- (h) Choose and attempt questions which are simple and clear. Take time to analyze questions than **hurriedly choose questions with unfamiliar key words.**
- (i) Make sure that comprehensive points are not watered down by wrong examples and other forms of illustrations
- (j) Write neatly, analytically and consistently