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*Combating Examination Stress*

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## ***Combating Examination Stress***

Board examinations for students are no less than any other competitive examinations today. Some emerge winners and some find themselves out in the world. The pressure to secure more marks can push students into an abyss of anxiety and confusion. Sometimes, with no apparent reason, a fully dedicated year leaves behind the poignant memories of failure to realize their full potential. Let us try to cover various questions, which concern students appearing for board examinations.

### **Q. 1. What kind of psychological state does a student pass through while preparing for Board Examination?**

Ans. Examination time is never an easy time for a student and Board Examinations make the situation especially stressful with peer and parental pressures along with stiff competition. This may result in a tense psychological state. A student undergoes a lot of psychological changes, as he perceives the examination as a platform through which he can prove himself, realize his career ambitions and make the dreams of his parents come true. A student of class X aims for a good result in the board examination to be able to get admission in the stream of his choice, i.e. the subject combination for senior secondary classes, which is the first stepping stone to his desired career. For a student of class XII, the main stress arises from trying to score a high percentage, enough for getting admission in a good college or career oriented professional institution. Thus, all these students go through a mental state full of stress due to various pressures and expectations, and some may even feel depressed due to an apprehension of not being able to perform well in the examination. Students, who are well prepared, feel more comfortable, excited and anxious to appear for examination and are ready to face challenges related to it.

### **Q.2. Do the students appearing for Board Examination require thorough preparation round the year ? If yes, why?**

Ans. Yes, students appearing for Board Examination require thorough preparation round the year if they want to score good marks. Selective study is full of risk because every topic, as per the syllabus, is equally important and the question paper is based on the whole syllabus containing various types of questions. The answers of different type of questions need different type of presentation, word limit and time management. A good understanding of all this is only possible when students do a lot of practice for writing the answers and refer to different books to remove the deficiencies in their preparation.

Thorough preparation round the year helps the students to avoid tension and confusion, arising due to last minute preparation. The steady person wins the race these days. Regular studies enhance confidence level, encourage a student, and are always beneficial. Thorough studies and revision work done in school every day, gives a better understanding of subjects. As a result, the student develops more interest in the subject and there is no phobia of Board Examinations. Self-discipline and a proper planning schedule definitely enhance confidence levels. Regular study does not mean a student living the life of a bookworm round the year.

**Q. 3. What role does a school play towards students of board classes ?**

Ans. The school plays a very important role in preparing students for Board Examination:

- The teaching faculty of the school and its timetable are the two major pillars. Only well-qualified and competent faculty can give proper coaching, training and provide effective teaching. For this purpose, from time to time the school has to send its faculty for orientation programmes and workshops to update them with the latest trend of CBSE and NCERT curriculum.
- Subject teachers can prepare CBSE questions scanner and question bank in each subject unit wise and provide these to the students. It will help them to go through various types of questions.
- The School can provide useful periodicals, magazines, good reference books, articles by experts and study material, in the library.
- The School can provide sample papers prepared by the subject teachers as per board norms to the students for practice purposes.
- The School can develop a proper feedback system after each examination in the school, to enable students to find out the areas needing improvement. In this regard, the teacher concerned can provide suggested answers to the students.
- In the school, there must be a clear study plan including a clean break up of syllabus to be completed in such a manner, that a student gets adequate time for revision.
- The School can take oral and written drills regularly to take the load off a student during the final days of preparation.
- The-School can develop a system for recognizing an individual's level of performance. It can then aim at developing each individual student to perform according to the best of his abilities. Teachers can make extra efforts for weak students and try to develop confidence in them. For this purpose, remedial classes can be conducted, regular written work can be given and simple learning notes can

be provided. Gifted students can be provided additional notes and reference books. Enrichment classes can be conducted for them. Regular Written Work can be assigned for evaluating the comprehension level of students. Teachers should avoid criticizing and be more suggestive, so that the morale of the students is kept high.

A school certainly plays a very important role in a student's life, as it is the place where he spends five to six hours every day. Efficient teachers, good environment, healthy competition as well as various co-curricular activities relevant to subject, help a student to perform better. Personal attention of subject teachers and their guidance is the key to success.

**Q. 4. What is the role of private tuition? Should students go for it or not?**

Ans. If a school provides efficient teaching faculty there is no need for the students to go for tuition. To an extent, parents are also responsible for inculcating the tuition culture. High expectations of the parents and the student's desire to do his best have increased the partiality towards private tuition. In case, the need arises, an individual should be very clear about his requirement and the kind of tutor he needs. Proper selection of the tutor is very important. The tutor should be a one who is familiar with the latest curriculum of the Board classes, well experienced and thorough with the subject of that particular class. But above all private tuition should be a temporary phase, need based and as far as possible should be avoided. Students should take maximum help from his subject teachers in the school.

**Q. 5. How can parents contribute to the success of their children?**

Ans. There are no shortcuts to bring a child to do his best. It is a gradual process of support, encouragement and hardwork, and all parents should strive for it. The support of parents to students preparing for Board Examinations is very significant. They should understand the mental level of their children and render support accordingly. Setting of daily routine, proper study hours, required recreation or relaxation, balanced diet and timely advice are a few mentionable points, which help in developing confidence in children. Instilling courage and building confidence in them to face challenges at the threshold of their career are the biggest responsibility of parents. They should take special care of their children by spending considerable time with them. This will make them feel more confident by experiencing their parents' support and the backing up of their efforts. They should realize the psychological pressure the child is going through and try to minimize it by having a light and joyful environment in the house.

**Q. 6. Besides the prescribed books and syllabus, what other material is available to the students appearing for Board Examinations? What is the role of reference books? Which one is more fruitful among Solved Board Papers/Model Test Papers Unsolved Question Papers?**

Ans. Often, the content of textbooks is not sufficient for students to be able to formulate answers according to the weightage of questions. In such cases, they may refer to other reference books, but only for the content required by them. Reference books are necessary for complete and elaborate understanding of the subject, as they explain the subject matter in detail. Also, for skill-based subjects, which require a lot of practice, students need additional reference books to practice and improve upon their skills. Usually, one good reference book is more than enough, but the syllabus according to NCERT/CBSE should be strictly adhered to.

"The best way of preparing for Board Examinations is to go through the marking scheme of the last five to six years of board question papers. This will help students in preparing and familiarizing themselves with the presentation of answers according to the weightage of marks and type of questions. The marking scheme of board question paper will help students in framing correct answers. This practice is feasible for the years where the syllabus and books are not changed. Good books published by reputed publishers may be considered. It has been noticed that unsolved question papers benefit only bright students. Experienced senior secondary school teachers should set the model test papers for practice along with marking scheme so that students can find out areas of improvement.

**Q. 7. How to do proper time management for preparation as well as writing examination?**

**Time management during the year : -**

A student must plan his schedule from the beginning of the academic session. Right from the initial months one has to maintain a balance between his preparations of subjects at home, along with the classroom teaching. A teacher in school can help students maintain regularity in studies by giving written assignments in the class, after completion of every unit. Weak students must utilize their holidays and vacations purposefully. Regular written drills help weak students to improve their performance, as success is not achieved instantly but through proper planning and preparation.

### **Time management during the examination: -**

In order to get the best of a three-hour examination, students should manage their time efficiently. It should be done in such a way that they are left with enough time to revise. The time available should be divided in such a manner that L A (Long Answer) type questions can be attempted skillfully. Answers should be presented effectively by making simple self-explanatory diagrams. If required, write headlines in answers and highlight the key words. Questions, about which students are not confident, should be attempted in the end. The time available should never be divided answer wise; it should be done section wise, for easier sections take less time than difficult ones. The length of answer must be according to the weightage of the marks, type of questions and the word limit, if stated in the question paper.

### **Q. 8. Some general guidelines for both 10 and 12 Std. students.**

Ans. The key to success lies in regular studies and working hard all the year round. It is known to all that there is no short cut to success and no substitute to hard work, however, instead of getting tense during examination, students should keep the following points in mind: -

- Students must reach the examination hall at least 20 minutes before the scheduled time.
- They should keep calm and breathe normally, once seated.
- Read the instructions carefully.
- Read the question paper well, before attempting it.
- Time should be divided in such a manner that at least ten minutes could be spared to revise and to justify different questions, carrying different weightage.
- They should use simple but effective language and highlight key words.
- Students should not be disheartened over a difficult appearing question about which they are not confident. It is wiser to first concentrate on the questions that can be answered easily by them.
- Do the best and leave the rest.
- Handwriting should be neat, legible and comfortable to the reader's eyes.
- Grammatical errors should be avoided. Ideas should be logically organized.
- Proper headlines and sub-headings should be given.
- Conclusion and keywords should be highlighted.
- Diagrammatic presentation should be given, if required.

Students and teachers should understand the different terms used in various types of questions :

**Difference in interpretation of the terms explain, elaborate, describe ---**

Students should go through the following learning objectives and specifications :-

<b>1. Objective : The Pupil</b>	<b>Acquisition of Knowledge Specification</b>
i. Recall	It involves responding to a given stimulus primarily on the basis of memory. The nature of information required: precision and exactness should not differ too much from the way it was originally learnt. It may even include recall of processes, such as computations based on a known mode of operations.
ii. Recognizes	It requires identifying the correct response merely on the basis of memory without going into basis of inappropriateness of alternative responses.
iii. Shows information on Maps, charts, diagrams, etc, without involving any substantive manipulative skill.	It pertains to a kind of recall in which a medium other than the verbal form is used.
iv. Reads information Represented in various known forms e.g., map charts, dictionary, catalogue etc.	It involves recall, recognition or both of already Well remembered information or practice or skill.
<b>2. Objective: The pupil</b>	<b>Development of understanding Specification</b>
i. Translates from one form of communication to another.	Renders in the required medium, material from other given medium faithfully, giving the closest possible equivalent of the original.

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|-------|---|---|
| ii.   | Compares<br>contrasts   | Draws out similarities and dissimilarities between sets of facts, terms, trends etc. It can be both on the basis of given criteria or unspecified criteria.   |
| iii.  | Classifies  | Groups together facts, terms etc. into homogeneous classes on the basis of criteria provided or implied.  |
| iv.   | Discriminates   | Draws distinction on some basis between closely related facts, events etc.  |
| v.    | Illustrates(gives<br>examples)  | Cites (produces) some similar material verbal or otherwise to clarify a point.  |
| vi.   | Detects errors/<br>rectifies errors   | Pin-points a mistake or fallacy in a communication, representation, apparatus etc. suggests or carries out necessary correction.  |
| vii.  | Identifies<br>relationship<br>(a) cause and<br>effect<br>(b) ways and<br>means. | Shows in a familiar situation what a given set of data has to do with an other; also states correspondence between two sets of familiar data.   |
| viii. | Explains  | Makes a brief communication about facts, phenomena etc. intelligible by referring, to their setting in a larger body of systematic and coherent relations and there by elucidates or elaborates it. |
| ix.   | Summarizes  | Condenses a communication by eliminating trivial details.   |
| x.    | Defines   | Determines scope and meaning of a concept, principles trends, etc.so exhaustively as to reversible.   |
| xi.   | Identifies<br>significant<br>points in<br>communication                         | Locates ideas contained in a given statement e. g. extracts from the constitution, definition etc.  |
| xii.  | Interpolates  | Bridges the gap in a communication to make it complete and meaningful.  |
| xiii. | Extrapolates .  | Extends the trend beyond the given data.  |



xiv. Arranges data in a particular order

Puts data sequentially to suit a particular context.

### 3. Objective:

### Application of knowledge

#### The pupil

#### Specification

i. Analyses a situation (problem) to discover the issues involved.

Breaks down a communication or situation into its components according to the required criteria and locates the desired issue (s), clarifies communication, discovers basis for its organisation and/or underlying assumptions.

ii. Selects facts, principles etc. relevant to a new situation.

It presupposes analysis of the given situation but goes beyond it in as much as to choose the fact relevant to the problem in hand.

iii. Draws inference

Analyses and examines the data and arrives at certain conclusion or decision pertaining to a situation.

iv. Hypothesizes on the available data

Gives a probable explanation of the phenomenon or data even in the absence of confirmed generalization.

v. Verifies hypothesis

Supports a statement of probability with proper evidence (data) justifying its consistency.

vi. Generalizes

Observes similarities in otherwise different things in a way to derive a principle inductively.

vii. Estimates

Makes an approximate judgement qualitative or quantitative, on the basis of available data.

viii. Establishes relationship

Brings out new association (s) or relationship(s) between sets of facts, principles etc. towards the resolution of a new problem.

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| ix.   | Predicts                           | Considers the situation in the light of available data and infers about the future events, phenomena, trends etc.  |
| x.    | Organizes data in a novel way      | Puts together various items of information (arranges and combines) in a way that a pattern emerges which may not be clearly there before.                                |
| xi.   | Judges adequacy of data            | Examines a new set of data and arrives at a decision about their appropriateness, completeness, relevance, essentially for drawing any wanted conclusion.                |
| xii.  | Evaluates against a criterion      | Judges comprehensively an argument, idea, material, method, hypothesis, generalization etc. against the criterion or the standard provided.                              |
| xiii. | Improvises a tool and an apparatus | Applies the knowledge of the principles underlying a certain known application to design another on his own or designs an altogether new application to answer a need. ' |
| xiv.  | Devises a plan/a set or operations | Produces a design or method or set of procedure to attack a problem and resolves it displaying ingenuity.  |

**4. Objective:**

**Development of Practical Skills**

**The pupil**

**Specification**

- |     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
| i.  | Draws maps, charts and other graphical representations. | Draws accurately and neatly map, diagrams etc. displaying the quality of skill expected of the class level concerned, for example drawing a simple outline might be expected skill for the lower primary stage but not after wards. |
| ii. | Prepares models, tools, slides, etc.                    | Same as above.  |

**Q. 9. What is the responsibility of Students?**

Ans. Students, preparing for Board Examination, have the foremost responsibility of scoring a good percentage to ensure their future. This makes their parents' dreams come true and gives them a strong standing in life, and of course a good name to their school.

**Q. 10. The anxiety of students increases as the examinations approach. Any suggestion to overcome that ?**

Ans. Students get eager to write their examination and score very good marks. Anxiety and stress grip the mind of students, the moment they hear of facing the examination. It is indeed a test of their intellect, knowledge, efficiency and ability. Not only their parents expectations but also their own, and their ambitions for the future are based on the result of these board examinations. Thorough preparation and an adequate amount of confidence can overcome this anxiety and result in the best performance according to potential.

**Q. 11. What are the tips for writing appropriate answers and scoring good marks?**

Ans.

- Observe carefully what has been asked in the question.
- Confine your answer to the word limit or sentence limit that has been stated.
- All type questions, incorporate the relevant points only, so that the limit is maintained and at the same time all the pertinent points are included in the answer.
- If asked to give the meaning of a concept, ensure that all key points of the concept are mentioned.
- Wherever necessary, give suitable and relevant examples.
- Chronological sequence should be maintained in the answer, where process has been asked.
- Depending upon the nature of the question, give suitable charts, diagrams etc. Charts and diagrams should be neatly prepared. Use only pencil for drawing purpose.
- If asked to comment on any given statement, give both view points-arguments, in favour and against.
- Highlight your answer with views of experts, wherever necessary.

- Write the basis in the questions related to comparison or distinction.
- Highlight the conclusion or your opinion in the given answer.
- Give the working notes, wherever required.
- First attempt those questions for which you have thorough preparation.
- All the parts of a question should be attempted at one place. Attempting the parts of the same question at different places puts the examiner to great inconvenience.
- So students follow the above tips and you will reap rich dividends.

Meticulously planned strategy for facing the examination and writing answers, keeping in view the above mentioned tips will certainly make students more confident about their excellent performance.

### To Conclude

Examination stress is like mist around learning conclaves of students brain. It not only blunts their power to memorize but hijacks general body comfort. They are taken over by recurring fits of irritation when parents and relatives ask them about their exam preparedness. They find terribly lacking in power and control over their mind and body. Plus tense neck, clutched shoulders and lack of proper sleep worsen the situation.

Like all risks we can always build defense against stress. Stress can be managed both at physical and mental levels. Here are some practical tips tried and suggested by the professionals of global repute.

### Managing Stress Mentally

“In the process of life neither happiness nor anxiety lasts forever. They occur to us on alternatively changing periods.” When you feel gloomy think that you were just getting out of the unhappy phase and good time was forthcoming. Say to yourself that stress is impermanent and unstable. Don't people enjoy risk while doing adventure ? Everything bad has a positive outcome also. This is called Pollyanna technique.

"Under stress, most often we are driven away by the thoughts of not performing well. When you think, visualize ‘success and progress’ and not ‘failure and blocking.’ "To relax, close eyes and visualize yourself chasing butterflies in a flower spotted, cool, green garden. Be a bird flying over the snow covered hill tops . Feel watching fish at play with your legs dipped in cool lake water. Stay there for five minutes & feel fresh. “Meditation is a time tested Indian technique with which modern world is benefiting the most. There are more than hundred techniques to meditate. If you don't know any specific method, try

this. Sit erect, close your eyes and let loose your eyeballs, neck, shoulders ... back up to toes one by one. Think of a white spot on your forehead and concentrate.

Feel that all your stress is draining out through this spot and the place being filled by bright sunlight. Repeat five times.

Discuss difficult questions with the friends and exchange views. Most challenging topics become your dear friends when shared and mutually elaborated.

#### Physical Level Stress Control

"Breathe in, count 10 and breathe out. Do it for 3 to 5 minutes. Relax.

"Pull in stomach muscles tightly, count five and release. Relax.

"Physical exercise is a wonderful stress buster. An hour's play (skate, cycle, swim, badminton etc.) or a rigorous walk gives your body a refreshing blood flow and an extra dose of oxygen to your brain cells which is vital to fight stress.

"Spend your time in open air as much as possible. Open air has no indoors- like smells and is rich in the elements which keep our physical energy at higher level. You can have your afternoon study sessions in the balcony, roof top or a corner of a public park. When you are indoors, keep ventilation on.

"Your favourite smells like lavender, musk or oils make your body relax to some extent. Coffee and tea may arouse your nervous system for some time but they leave you more stressed at the end.

So, students teachers and parents follow the above tips and your will reap rich dividends.

*Best of Luck ....*

