

EXAMINER TIPS for IGCSE ICT 0417

How to Use These Tips

These tips highlight some common mistakes made by candidates. They are collected under various subheadings to help you when you revise a particular topic. You will also find links to some useful websites for research or revision.

General Advice

- Learn the main facts, terms and concepts in your syllabus.
- Make sure that you understand what you have learnt. Do not simply memorise it.
- Talk to your teacher about the way the papers will be marked [assessed].
- Make sure you understand the difference between key command words in questions such as name /give / describe / discuss / explain.
- Look at past papers so that you will know what your exam is going to look like.
- Do practice tests to build up your confidence.

General Tips for Paper One

- Read the question carefully!
- Make sure you understand what you have been asked to do before you start your answer. For example these key words help you to know how to answer a question and how much information to give.
 - **Name** *You have to write down a short phrase answering the question. This is probably the only time a one-word answer would provide an acceptable answer, though you are advised to use a phrase wherever possible.*
 - **Give** *You usually have to provide the marker with more information than a mere single word statement.*
 - **Describe** - *Generally requires sentences to be used. In addition to naming the answer you should go on to write a sentence or two to show your understanding of the answer. You have to convince the marker of your ability to describe an answer that is appropriate to the question.*
 - **Give reasons/Explain** *In general, means to write down why certain things happen as opposed to describing what happens. If you write about a situation, even in great detail, without giving reasons why it happens will gain no marks.*
 - **Discuss** *You usually have to write down **both** advantages and disadvantages to show both sides of an argument in the given situation. Discuss requires you to give both sides of an argument and then to provide your conclusion. It must be clear what are considered to be the advantages and the disadvantages.*
- Try to allocate your time sensibly between questions. The marks given to a question will give you a good guide as to how much to write and how long to spend on the question.
- Make sure that you attempt all questions on the paper. If you leave gaps try to go back and fill them in at the end of the exam.
- Try to allow some time to check your answers and correct any mistakes.
- It is very important that you answer the exact question asked. Avoid including irrelevant information just because you have learnt it.
- Avoid giving a list of points as an answer to a question. This is rarely a good answer. Usually you should write linked up sentences for a description or explanation.
- Follow the instructions provided carefully. If you are asked to give two reasons for something then giving four will not gain you any more marks and you will have wasted your time.
- If the question asks for an example then you **MUST** give one if you are to gain high marks.

General tips for practical papers

- Make sure your name and other details appear on every printout you wish to be marked. Printouts without a name will not be marked. You are helped to achieve this by instructions built into every section of the papers.
- Cross out any printout that you do not wish to be marked.
- Do not expect the paper to be exactly like a previous one. You need to be prepared to think out how to solve a slightly different problem than ones you have worked before, using your knowledge of the software and practical skills as well as software help if you need it.
- Read the paper and questions carefully to make sure you know what you need to do.
- Decide how you will approach the paper. Some sections may depend on others being completed first, e.g. e-mail to get files before work on document editing or database, while others may be able to be completed independently, e.g. spreadsheet / web design / presentation graphics.

E-mail and internet

If you do not receive a reply in good time,

- check the e-mail address where you sent the message
- Do not sit and worry about not being able to get on with the test
- tell your supervisor that you are having difficulty
- be aware that there will be alternative arrangements for getting examination materials in case of delay

If you cannot get to the internet for any reason, do the same things as above.

Document production

- Make sure you have set up the document as specified.
- Make sure you have carried out all the editing and formatting instructions.
- You can use the tick boxes to check your document is laid out as required.
- Note that if the document runs to many pages (i.e. usually 5 to 6 at most), then there is probably something wrong with the layout.
- The document may not be completed until you have carried out some other tasks e.g. database searches, or images / charts to be made. If you do not complete the integration of data into your document, print the document anyway as you cannot get marks for work you have done without printed evidence.

Database

- When you make your reports, make sure that all data is fully visible for headings and field data.
- Check that you have selected and sorted records as specified. Reports will usually fit on one (at most two) pages. So if you have a report that runs to many pages, you will probably need to check for a record selection error.
- Make sure your name and candidate details appear on the report (i.e. place these details in the correct section of the report).

Web pages

- Check you have set up styles as specified. Check your name and details appear on the print out of the saved stylesheet.
- Check that you attach your stylesheet to the pages.
- Check that the styles you defined are applied to the web pages as seen in the browser view.
- Check that all paths to links are relative and not absolute.
- Print the web pages in browser view and also showing the html coding used. Highlight the portions of code that are relevant to the changes you have made e.g. where you attach a stylesheet, where a hyperlink is made, or where an image is resized.
- Check you have done everything required by using the tick boxes on the paper at each step.

Spreadsheets

- Make sure that when you print formulae, they are fully visible when printed. Long file paths may make the printout very small if fitted onto one page wide. It would be preferable to have the formulae visible and large enough to read than to try to squeeze all printouts onto one page.
- Make sure you print a view showing values as well as one showing formulae. You will probably also have to print one or two selections from all the data, and these printouts will normally show values and not formulae.

Presentation graphics

- Make sure you set up any master slide elements as specified. These are items that will appear in exactly the same place on every slide.
- Edit any slides carefully and provide the printouts that are required, e.g. single slides, audience handouts, slides with presenter notes or presentation outline.
- You will also probably need to provide printed evidence of transitions or animations you have applied to slides. This may be on one printout or two and may take the form of screenshots.