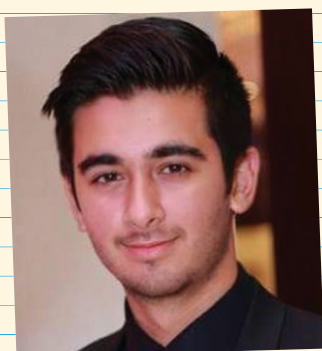


## SPECIALIST MATHEMATICS

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**Study Score = 50**



**The thing I liked best about Specialist Mathematics was...** the application of pure mathematical skills and logic in a variety of new situations. The subject was one completely void of rote learning and the mindless recital of memorised facts. Instead, success always lied in the ability to take a basic and often fundamental mathematical concept and use it in weird and wondrous scenarios - abstract or realistic.

**The best advice I can give students about Specialist Mathematics...** may seem relatively obvious. It is practice. However, this practice must be done the right way to be effective. My Methods teacher had an eloquent theory on the matter. He used to say that every student has an individual 'critical mass of questions' that they must complete for each topic before they get to the point where they can be assured that they will make no mistakes. Mathematics is about perfectionism. It is only once you can consistently use a mathematical

concept without any errors that you can move on to apply it. At this point, you must become a machine. By completing as many different types of application questions as you can, you are guaranteeing that nothing on the final exam will throw you.

**One month before the final Specialist Mathematics exam, I...** was in full flight. We had completed all the coursework and so, I was powering through my revision. The key to VCE is organisation, so by this stage I had ensured that I had reviewed all the basic concepts on the course so I could dive into exam-style questions. The earlier you do this, the better, as it allows greater exposure to a wider variety of question styles and types, thus decreasing your chances of disorientation on the exam. For maths, practice exams are your greatest resource. By completing as many as possible and reviewing them thoroughly, you become a more able mathematical perfectionist - one who has seen all, and makes no mistakes.

**One week before the final Specialist Mathematics exam...** the rate at which I was completing practice exams had decreased. I had left only a few, more recent past exams to complete in the lead-up to the actual exam. This was to ensure I had a firm understanding of the current format and question types (these things change with time). However, although my rate of question completion had dropped slightly, I was reviewing all my exams and SACs frequently - making sure I understood all the mistakes I had made throughout the year, listing them, and learning how to rectify and prevent them.

**On Specialist Mathematics exam day, I prepared myself by...** calming down. I listened to music, talked to friends (the ones who weren't freaking out - I tried to avoid them for this period) and ensured my mind was clear. Cluttering your brain with mathematical concepts

that you don't understand or that stress you out at this point will do more harm than good.

**After the Specialist Mathematics exam, I...** had only a few hours of relaxation, as I wasn't finished with my exams. I had Chemistry the next day, and German a week later. During this period, it is quite easy to lose motivation or to become overwhelmed by the stress and workload.

**The best exam advice I received was...** to maintain a balanced lifestyle during the VCE. It is impossible for one person to work continuously with no method of relaxation for one to two years. You will inevitably burn out. So, I made sure I didn't neglect my hobbies - the sports I played or the things I enjoyed doing at home. I made time to meet up with friends and to go to parties, and made sure I was organised enough to still complete all my work. You're only 18 once, enjoy it.

**I did not work a part-time job during Year 12 because...** although the benefits are obvious - the development of a good work ethic and the attainment of experience for future employability - my time was already stretched.

*For maths, practice exams are your greatest resource. You must become a mathematical perfectionist - one who has seen all.*