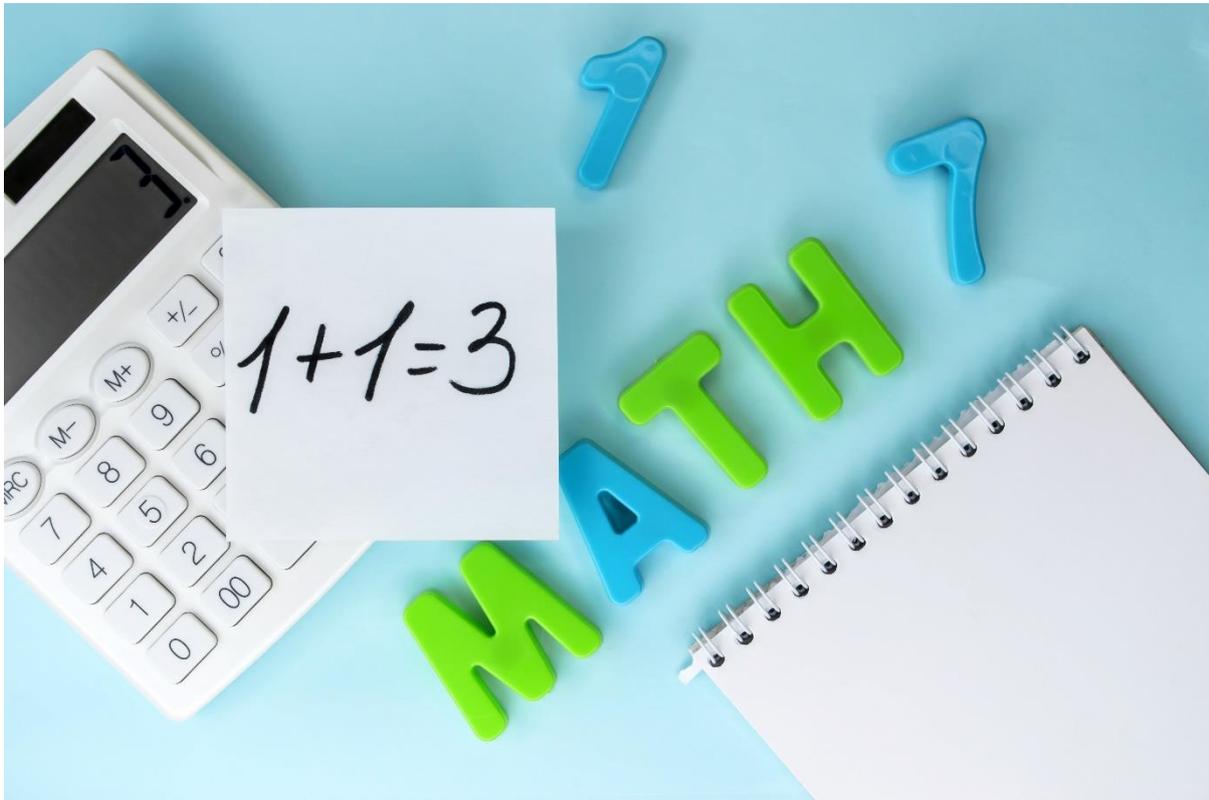


## Article 2: How to Minimise Errors in Math



### **How to Minimise Errors in Math**

Of all mistakes you could make while doing a Math paper, careless mistakes tend to hurt the most. That's because you know for a fact that if you'd checked more closely, the error could've been avoided, and marks might not have been wasted.

Good news – such mistakes can be weeded out! All you need to do is to equip yourself with the right study techniques. Let's take a look at 5 tips you can make use of to enhance your Math learning (and also save those marks).

### **5 Ways to Avoid Careless Mistakes**

By consciously acting on these tips while revising at the start, you're allowing them to form into good habits over time. So, when you're finally sitting for your exam, you'd be a true master of avoiding careless mistakes!

## 1. Highlight Key Points

When you've spent too much time looking at numbers and more numbers, all of it may end up looking a little like gibberish. But there's a way to prevent that from happening – highlighting! That extra pop of colour helps make important points stand out, so that you don't accidentally miss out on them.

Remember to add a highlighter into your pencil case if you haven't done so. And of course, don't overdo it by highlighting *everything*. That defeats the purpose of the highlighter then!

## 2. Leave No Questions Behind

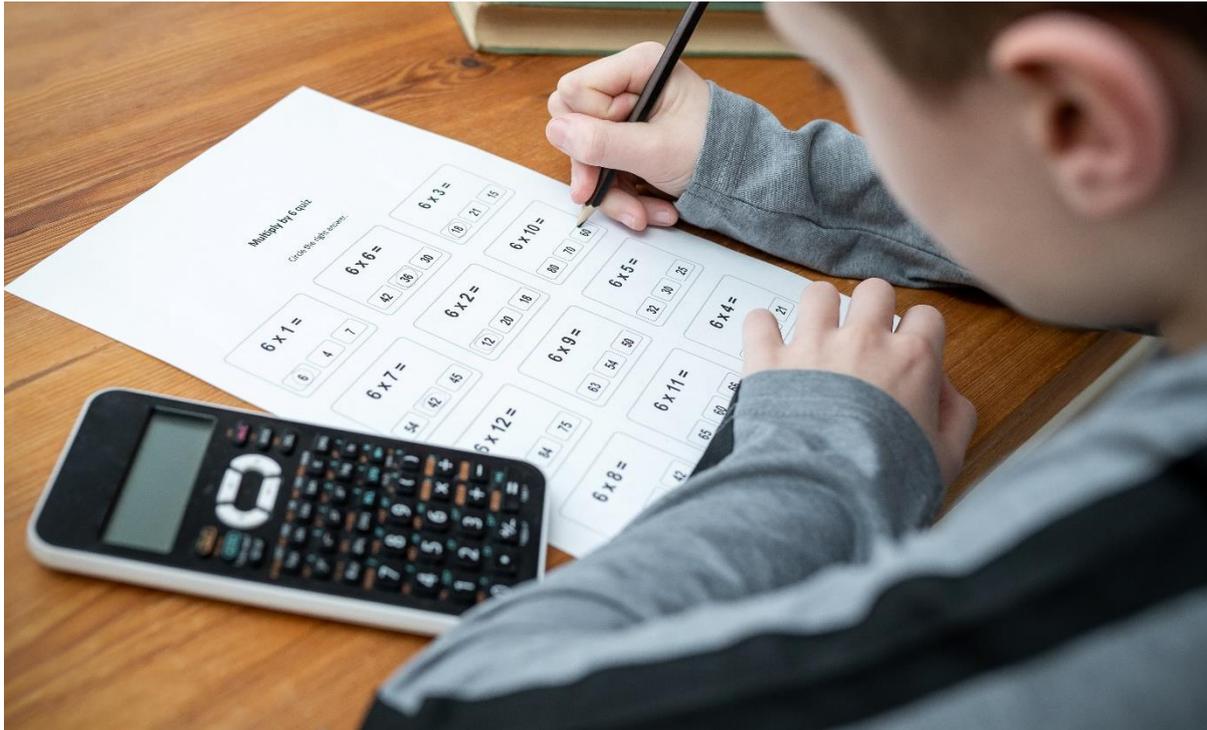
The worst thing that could happen to anyone after a Math exam (or any exam for that matter) is finding out that you've completely missed out on an entire page of questions – all because you somehow flipped two pages at one go. That could mean an easy loss of over 10 marks!

The examiner will often go through the paper with everyone at the start to make sure there're no missing pages. Rather than just blindly going through the motion of flipping, take this time to scan through the contents on each page, so that you get a rough idea of what questions are asked. By doing so, you're less likely to miss anything when you're actually doing the paper.

You might also have the tendency to skip to the next question if you don't know how to solve the one you're at. A way to remember that you have an unsolved question on that page is by dog-earring the top corner!

## 3. Check Your Units

From 'cm' to 'm', 'g' to 'kg', 'mℓ' to 'ℓ'... There are SO many units in Math. But imagine if you accidentally swapped one unit out for another! Marks lost immediately. Can you already see yourself screaming in absolute fury at such a mindless mistake?!



To prevent that from happening, always compare your units with what is stated in question. Moreover, the question might sometimes try to throw you off by including different units. A simple example could be:

“The flask contains 3ℓ of water.  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the water is poured out. How much water is there left? State your answer in mℓ.”

That’s when you can make use of Tip #1, that is, highlighting noteworthy points! And check that your answer reflects what you highlighted.

#### 4. Manage Your Time Wisely

Time is of the essence – and particularly so during an exam. Without enough time, the earlier tips may not even matter. So, make sure you space out your time properly. If you find yourself stuck at a certain question, move on to the next one (also refer back to Tip #2). This is not to say that you should rush through the paper either. Many students, in order to finish the paper fast, end up overlooking their calculation’s accuracy.

So, don’t rush. Instead, pace yourself. This ensures quality of answers and not just quantity. Like the old saying goes: slow and steady wins the race (but of course, not too slow)!

### **BONUS TIP! Plonk Answers Back into the Equation**

This tip is great to do if you have enough spare time after completing all your questions. Rather than checking through each working, which is tedious and time-consuming, simply substitute your answer back into the original equation and see if it flows through.

Only when it doesn't will you have to play cat and mouse with your workings. But let's hope that doesn't happen!



### **Be Confident, But Not Overconfident**

Having the right mindset while you're sitting for an exam can do wonders. Your thoughts and feelings can affect how you perform. Research shows that if you're already discouraged and assuming the worst for the exam, chances are that it'll actually materialise into reality. Many tend to neglect how important it is to keep the spirit and stay positive!

Remember: confidence is key.

If you enter the exam hall with boosted morale and believing that you can indeed do well, you tend to subconsciously put in more effort into solving each problem. But as usual, too much of a good thing can eventually make it bad. Just as with confidence, too much of it leads to overconfidence, resulting in you taking revision and checks for granted.

It's essential then to strike a balance. That's easier said than done, of course. But equipping yourself with these study techniques is certainly a step in the right direction!

AlphaOmegaMath Editorial Team

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