

## Getting a High Score for MCQ Standard Science

For students aiming to get AL1, MCQs are critical in achieving that target. A near perfect score is needed and a key strategy to help you reach that goal is to identify the key phrases in the question stem.

The most common way of identifying key phrases is to highlight them. It will help students to determine what concepts are tested and how to explain them.

- Critical words that can provide more details, or specific details.

Example 1: “**Only** Material A allows light to pass through”

“Only” is the critical word here. It only means exclusivity, specifically a property of material A.

Example 2:

A plant with roots is placed in a beaker and has it’s **roots covered with black plastic bag.**

Highlight “roots covered with black plastic bag”. When students read roots, the first thing that comes to mind is the absorption of water. The fact that it is wrapped with black plastic, mean it can no longer carry out its function of absorbing water.

- Description/labels in the diagram.

These key descriptions are usually the variables in a question and will affect the results. Whenever an object is labelled in the diagram, it is most likely to be part of the required answer,

- Name of processes, words describing key concepts.

Words like evaporation, heat loss to the surroundings and absorption of excess water quickly remind students the concepts that the examiner is testing.

Each time the student highlight the words, the student will remind himself the importance of that key words and the concepts involved.

It is important to note that although you need to invest the time in annotating to identify key concepts, taking too long to decide on the answer may also be detrimental to your cause.

Some students may get “stuck” on certain MCQs and failing to manage time effectively. This will have repercussions as they tend to rush the last few MCQs

and even worse, Booklet B where there are more than ample marks to make up for these few difficult MCQs.

A good gauge is to answer 6 MCQs for every 10-12mins. Keep track of your time and find the courage to move on to the next questions if you are behind time.