

HSC Student Profile: Adam

Question 1

Please state your name.

Adam

Question 2

Which year did you complete your HSC?

2009

Question 3

Did you study any Year 12 HSC subjects (accelerated) in Year 11?
If yes, please list the subject(s).

No

Question 4

At which school did you complete Year 12?

Newcastle Grammar School

Question 5

What scores did you obtain for each of your Year 12 studies?

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Assessment Mark</i>	<i>Examination Mark</i>	<i>HSC Mark</i>	<i>Performance Band</i>
<i>Business Studies</i>	<i>87</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>92</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>English Advanced</i>	<i>93</i>	<i>93</i>	<i>93</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>English Extension 1</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>E4</i>
<i>Mathematics Advanced</i>	<i>93</i>	<i>93</i>	<i>93</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Mathematics Extension 1</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>E4</i>
<i>Modern History</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>97</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>6</i>

Question 6

What was your final ATAR?

98.90

Question 7

Which tertiary course did you enrol into?

Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Laws

Question 8

Which university/tertiary institution are you enrolled in/planning to attend?

The University of Newcastle



The following questions relate to a typical week where there were no major examinations forthcoming:

Question 9

How many hours did you dedicate to study (outside school) across a typical week?

My weekly study regime would often consist of two or three hours of study on weeknights and Saturday/Sunday. I had no set study plan outside of exam time – I simply found that two or three hours a night was the amount required for me to develop a sophisticated understanding of my subjects. However, one weekly convention of mine was going easy on a Friday night, when I would take some time off, chat to my family and watch a movie.

Question 10

What was your typical weekday routine?

My wake time was anywhere between 6.30 and 7 in the morning, giving me plenty of time to get ready without rushing or stressing too badly. I would leave for school at about 8 in the car and travel time to and from school was roughly 20 minutes. School ended at 3.05, but some days I would have extracurricular activities after this until 5. Study time each day was largely dependent on what day of the week it was – if I had finished at 3, I was still fresh enough to come home, have some afternoon tea and a flick through the newspaper before hitting the books. If I had finished at 5, I was more tired and generally waited until after dinner (around 7 – 7.30) to study.

Question 11

Where did you engage in the bulk of your study on a day to day basis?
(eg. bedroom, school library etc).

Almost all my study was done in my bedroom or at the computer. Occasionally, I would study at the library, but I preferred to loan books and read them at home. Some of my friends could not study at home but I was lucky enough to have a big desk facing a window that made it relatively easy and relaxing to study.

Question 12

How many hours did you dedicate to study across school holidays?

In the first set of holidays, I did no study whatsoever, figuring I would appreciate a break. In the second set, I read extensively for my subjects to give myself a good grounding heading onto the Trials. In the final holidays before the HSC, I studied for up to 5 hours per day. This might seem like a hard slog, but once those two weeks were over, I could rest easy in the knowledge that I was solidly prepared for my exams.

Question 13

Did you engage in any extra curricular activities across Year 12? If yes, please indicate the activities and how much time was dedicated to each activity.

I was in a jazz big band at school called 'Brass RaZoo' that practiced for two hours per week on a Monday afternoon. I was also in a debating team that was involved in debates across the state throughout the year. Debates were held after school, taking up to three hours from start to end.

Question 14

How did you balance/organise your study with other commitments like work or sport or family?

I organised my life around the principle that study was my first priority. This meant that if I absolutely had to study then I would refuse other activities. However, that is not to say I always put study first! Exercise, socialising and spending time with your family are all extremely important and success will only come through a balanced lifestyle. I made time for these things as best I could in my life and if studying was getting too much, I would head out for a bike ride, or chat with my parents, or do something else to let off steam.

The following questions relate to a typical week where there were major examinations forthcoming:

Question 15

How did you approach the task of preparing for the exam? (For example, would you start the process by writing notes? If so, which resources did you use to compile materials etc).

Firstly, I prepared early. I learnt quickly that I was easily distracted while studying and needed to give myself plenty of time to make sure I knew the material. Once I understood the material, I practised applying it. This way I developed techniques to commit material to memory as well as practicing how to write the right answer in the exam room.

Question 16

How many hours did you dedicate to study (outside of school) in the weeks leading up to the exams?

In weeks leading up to exams, I did more study than normal school weeks. I roughly planned my study around the order of my exams to make sure I didn't run out of time to prepare for whatever was first. On school weekdays, I studied for at least three hours a night. On weekends and in the holidays after school had finished, I would study for several hours after midday, giving myself the morning to freshen up and focus. Unlike school weeks, Fridays became just another day, and instead of taking those evenings off I ploughed right through them!

Question 17

What was your typical day to day routine when studying for the exams?

In the days leading up to exams, I was in full study mode. I woke up early, had breakfast, a shower and then spent some time reading the newspaper or watching TV to get the 'procrastination' out of my system! Then, usually at about 11 or 12, I would close the door to my room and study hard. Every hour or so I would take a short break by going to the kitchen for a glass of water and perhaps a muesli bar before settling back into the constant rhythm of study. I would try and get to bed early leading up to exams to ensure that I was well rested and able to focus the next day.

Question 18

Did you continue your extracurricular activities in the weeks leading up to the exams?

Before my exams, I stopped my involvement in extracurricular activities. Since I was only going to get one shot at a good result, I 'uncluttered' my life to stop myself from being distracted.

Question 19

Which technique(s) did you use to learn materials "off by heart"? (eg. writing notes, re-writing, reading texts etc).

I used a variety of techniques to commit course material to memory. I collected what we had been taught and made it into detailed summaries which I called 'syllabus companions' because they helped me get to know the syllabus! Then, I would practice writing answers to past exam questions with the aid of these notes. This had two purposes: I slowly memorised the material as well as practicing how to apply it in an exam. Close to the exam, I got my parents to quiz me on each point of my syllabus notes after dinner – this was a relaxing way to study that made a change from the monotony of doing it by myself. I have always been an audiovisual learner, so I recorded my syllabus summaries on my phone and listened to them at night while I was resting in bed! I felt stupid listening to my own voice, but I really do think they helped.

Question 20

When did you start preparing for your TRIAL exams?

Again, I gave myself plenty of time to prepare for my trial exams. I began preparation about a month beforehand, slowly at first but increasing in intensity as the trials drew nearer.

Question 21

How much study did you engage in between the TRIALS and the final HSC exams?

Between the trials and the final HSC exams, I built on what I had prepared for the trials by 'patching up' my knowledge and making sure I had absolutely everything covered. I also practiced my exam writing techniques to gain those extra few marks that make all the difference in the HSC.

Question 22

Do you feel that you invested enough time into study between the Trials and the final HSC exams?
Would you have benefited from additional study across this period?

I feel now that I did about as much study as I could after the Trials. Because there is a gap of several weeks, it is easy to feel that because you are on the 'home stretch' you can slack off a little. I tried to resist the temptation and I think I succeeded.

Question 23

Did your Year 12 peers at school invest in significant study in the lead up to the TRIALS?

Amongst my friends at school, I seemed to be one of the first to begin studying for the trials. Many people I knew began studying roughly two weeks before exams. In the end, I was glad that I had begun earlier because I had a more holistic grasp of the courses that helped me in the trials and especially in the final exams. Laying the foundations properly always pays off!

Question 24

Did your Year 12 peers at school invest in significant study between the TRIALS and the final HSC exams?

Between the trials and the final exams, my school peers studied just as hard as me, but given that I had begun earlier, I kept my competitive advantage. I noticed that many more people began approaching their teachers for advice and writing up summaries, something that I had done a long time before.

Question 25

Were the TRIAL exams an accurate reflection of the difficulty and style of questions encountered in the final HSC exams?

Generally, the trials were a fairly accurate reflection of the difficulty of the HSC. However, there were two major differences. Firstly, the trial exams did not contain anything 'unexpected', that is, the structure of the questions and the types of questions themselves did not differ greatly from previous years' exams. In the final exams, there were a few such surprises, so it is important not to get complacent. Also, the final exams carry with them the onus of a strong finish, and that pressure to clear the final hurdle made them seem harder even if they were not in terms of technical difficulty.

Question 26

Did you suffer from anxiety attacks or mind blocks in any of your exams? What did you do to alleviate or get through these situations?

There was one assessment during the year in which I had a severe mind blank and performed very poorly. That outcome taught me a valuable lesson: whatever I wrote, it would be better than nothing at all. Furthermore, writing that may seem frivolous or substandard to you as you write it may in fact contain important information that leads to high marks! I went into the exams confident of my knowledge and my abilities and I did not let the exam paper cast doubt upon that confidence. The best way to prevent a mind blank is to stop the exam paper from 'pushing you around', so to speak.

Questions Relating to the Subject You Have Been Asked to Write About

Question 1

Which subject does this report relate to?

Business Studies

Question 2

Based on your results and performance throughout the year, were you confident that you would obtain a Band 6 result? If not, what Band or overall mark were you anticipating/hoping to receive?

My performance in Business Studies varied quite widely throughout the year. Sometimes I performed well and sometimes I did not. However, I made up my mind that I wanted to achieve a Band 6 in Business Studies, and after I had finished the exam I was confident of a Band 6 result.

Question 3

Which section/topic of the syllabus did you find most challenging?

I recall finding Employment Relations quite a challenging topic! I think I spent more time on that topic than any of the others.

Question 4

How much time did you spend preparing/working on school assessments?

I spent a fair degree of time on school assessments. Often we would only get a fortnight's notice so preparing a submission was usually quite a frantic process. My usual approach was to set a general goal and then do as much work as I thought I needed to in order to achieve that goal.

Question 5

What was the best source of help/information for your assessments? (Text book, teacher, friends, lectures, tutorial programs, private tutors, internet, own research etc).

There were two goldmines of information that I used: my textbook and my teacher. I often found that both these sources complemented each other when I was preparing or reviewing notes.

Question 6

Did you regularly use a private tutor in this subject? If so, did you find this assistance beneficial?

No. I figured that I didn't need a tutor and since none of my friends had one, I wasn't going to be the odd one out!

Question 7

Did you attend a tuition college/tutorial classes/lectures to assist in this subject? Did you find this assistance beneficial?

No

Question 8

If applicable, do you feel that you would have obtained the same score if you did not use tutors/coaches/lectures/tuition programs?

N/A

Question 9

What was your best source of help across the year (teacher, tutor, lecture program etc)?

My teacher was an invaluable source of help. I could go to see him almost whenever I wanted, hand him work that I had done, and ask questions relating to particular areas of the course material. The best thing about teachers is that they are easier to access than tutors etc. and I took advantage of this fact as best I could.

Question 10

Did you do anything differently study wise in comparison to your peers at school?

Compared to my peers, I handed far more work into my teacher to be checked and marked, and judging from what I saw of their study habits, my revision of the course material and the summaries that I made were a bit more thorough than usual. Most importantly, however, I started the whole process of study earlier than most people!

Question 11

Do you feel that you had an advantage over other students in this subject? If so, what was this advantage?

I had two main advantages over other students. The first was that I made an effort to read around the subject by buying business magazines and so on. This gave me good general knowledge of the 'business of business', so to speak. Furthermore, I have a good memory and this made it relatively easy for me to learn course material and hone my exam writing skills.

Question 12

Compare the subjects for which you obtained your lowest and highest HSC Marks/Bands.

Detail what you did differently between the two subjects and if applicable, provide your opinion on why you obtained such different scores.

My lowest scoring subject was Mathematics Extension 1. My highest was Modern History. These are very different subjects in terms of revision; maths is all about revision whereas history requires a deep conceptual understanding of the major topics and themes (and I would say that Business Studies requires a bit of both!). I think the main difference between my preparation for these two subjects was that I was simply more motivated to study Modern History and so I put more effort into it. My performance in each of my subjects was a function of how much effort I put into them, in order from least to most!

Question 13

As part of your HSC/TRIAL exam preparation for this subject, did you spend time writing up a comprehensive set of notes from which to learn? If yes, how many hours do you believe you invested into this task?

I spent several hours writing up detailed notes for each topic of Business Studies, making sure that I addressed each point in the syllabus. This gave me a repository of course information that was easy to access and easier to remember than rewriting class notes or the textbook.

Question 14

Did you purchase/acquire quality notes to assist in your examination preparation? If yes, did you find this acquisition beneficial? Why/why/not?

I bought an Excel book on Business Studies but found it to be almost useless and rarely referred to it.

Question 15

How many examination papers did you work through as part of your exam preparation?

I worked through questions from about ten exam papers that I accessed through the Board of Studies website. This gave me a great deal of questions that covered most points from the syllabus. Once I had worked through exam questions, I collected them and handed them into my teacher for marking. I then incorporated his feedback into subsequent attempts.

Question 16

Which exam papers did you work through?

(List the names of the entities/organisations that produced the exam papers).

The exam papers that I used were past HSC papers from the Board of Studies website, years 1999-2009.

Question 17

Did you work through any exam papers under exam conditions? If yes, how many?

While I didn't work through entire papers under exam conditions, I did practice the various sections of the paper under exam conditions. This saved time and helped me focus more closely. I made sure to time how long it took me to finish whatever I was doing (for example, the short-answer section). I also handed these attempts into my teacher (he must have been sick of marking my work by October!).

Question 18

How much time was invested into preparing for the TRIAL examination?

How much time was invested into preparing for the final HSC examination?

Which examination did you find more difficult and why?

It's difficult for me to say how much time in total I put into the trial/HSC exams, because preparation is an endless cycle of learning, revising and applying that lasts the entire year. What I can say is that I put more preparation into my HSC exams than I did my trials, while for many of my friends it was the other way around. I found the HSC exam more difficult because it was the 'final hurdle' of the course and I felt like I needed to make a decent job of the paper. The nature of some of the questions also seemed different to the questions I was used to, and that was a bit unnerving.

Question 19

Had you previously covered all the questions/concepts that appeared in the exams or did the exam paper contain materials that you had never seen before? If so, did this make you panic in the exams?

The exam had nothing that I hadn't seen before, but sometimes it seemed difficult to discern exactly what the right answer to a question should be. I approached this by making sure that whatever I wrote came from the syllabus and was explained sensibly and relevantly.

Question 20

Did you complete every question in the TRIAL exam? If no, please estimate how much of the paper you did address.

I completed every question in the trial Business Studies exam.

Question 21

Did you complete every question in the final HSC exam? If no, please estimate how much of the paper you did address.

I completed every question in the final HSC exam.

Question 22

Did you use any special exam techniques when working through the actual exams?

The most important, and simple, technique that I used was that of effective time management.

Question 23

If applicable, what mistakes did you make when preparing for the TRIAL exams?

Did you do anything differently when preparing for the final HSC examinations?

One mistake I made was not preparing for the two Extended Response questions thoroughly enough, and as a result my marks in that section were lower than in the others. I had also left important information out of my summaries because of the time pressures of preparation. When the time came to prepare for my final exams I ensured that these were the first two issues I addressed.

Question 24

Which resources did you find most helpful when preparing for the exams?

My textbook, my teachers and my notes were the most helpful resources of all!

Question 25

What advice would you provide to those students aiming for a Band 6 in this subject?

Business Studies is all about knowing the content and being able to communicate your knowledge to whoever marks your paper! The key to success in this subject is practice, practice, practice. If you practice enough, knowledge and competence will come naturally.

General Advice

Question 1

What was the most difficult aspect of completing your HSC studies and how did you overcome this?

The most difficult aspect of the HSC for me was not knowing what my end result would be. It's all very well to work hard at each individual assessment task, but ultimately your ATAR is a question mark up until the day you receive it. This is difficult to overcome – nothing I did would change it – but I made sure that I set myself goals that were more directly related to my subjects, such as getting a particular mark in the exam. This way I could work towards goals with a better understanding of the required effort.

Question 2

If you had your time over again, would you do anything differently across Year 11 and/or 12?
Why/Why Not?

I was happy enough with my ATAR that I didn't really think much about what I could have done differently! However, I do think that if I had worked harder in Year 11, it would have made Year 12 that little bit easier, and helped my results as well.

Question 3

Is there anything that you wish you had known about before entering the HSC?

In a word, no. I learnt all I needed to know about succeeding in the HSC as I studied towards it.

Question 4

Are there any resources/services/products that would have assisted you in your studies had they been available?

I believe that the simplest and most obvious resources are the best. That is, teachers and textbooks. They were all I really needed to do well in the HSC and work to the best of my ability.

Question 5

If you had one piece of advice to give future students, what would it be?

Do your best to remember that the world doesn't stop revolving!