

HSC Student Profile: Daniel

Question 1

Please state your name.

Daniel

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?

North Sydney Boys High 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>English Advanced</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>English Extension</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Mathematics</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Maths Extension</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>E4</i>
<i>Ancient History</i>	<i>97</i>	<i>97</i>	<i>97</i>	<i>E4</i>
<i>Extension History</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>E4</i>
<i>Indonesian Continuers</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Indonesian Extension</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>E4</i>

Question 6

What was your final ATAR?

99.75

Question 7

Which tertiary course did you enrol into?

Advanced Arts (Honours) (English, Ancient History, Latin and Philosophy, without a major so far)

Question 8

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

University of Sydney



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?

3 hours each weekday.

8 hours on either Saturday or Sunday.

With at least one afternoon off during the week, and one day off on the weekend.

Question 10

What was your typical weekday routine?

Typical day was:

Wake at 6 do yoga for 30 minutes.

Leave at 7 to get the bus for an hour.

On the bus studied Indonesian vocabulary.

School from 9 until 3.

Bus home for an hour and a half with friends. (Home at 4.30)

Grab something to eat (fruit or toast or something simple)

Study from 5 until 7, with 10 minute breaks every 50 minutes.

Dinner until 8 then study for an extra hour.

Read a novel from 9 until 10 then go to sleep.

Question 11

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

Most of it in the bedroom, but I also did some at the library near school, so I could study maths with my friends.

Question 12

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

I would do full days on my major work for extension history, around 8 hours.

On a study day I would do 8 hours, but I would only study 3 days a week during the holidays.

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.

Yoga most days of the week for 30 minutes

Question 14

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

I stopped playing a team sport during year twelve so I could manage my time flexibly, and I didn't work. Family and my girlfriend would always come first if they needed me. I'd probably spend one afternoon a week with my girlfriend, and one day on the weekend, and also try to meet her during lunch breaks or just after school.

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).

I wrote notes throughout the year, as well as sharing them with my classmates, on "wikispaces". Therefore when exams arrived I only needed to read over them. My notes were written primarily from books and academic sources, very rarely textbooks because the detail is often not sufficient for a band 6. Typically, when memorising I would sit in my room and read my notes aloud, sometimes walking around. It was important to be able to argue about the facts, not just know them. Practicing this ability to argue would generally involve questioning myself about what I was memorising, and then forming arguments about these verbally. I'm sure I sounded silly to my family, speaking to myself, but it works.

Question 16

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

I'd follow the same routine as I had throughout the year, this way I didn't increase my stress level as exams approached. If I wasn't at school I would usually take Friday off and one day on the weekend.

Question 17

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

Exactly the same.

If it was on a study vacation day, or on the weekend:

Wake at 7 do yoga and get ready until 8.

Study from 8 until 12, with 10 minute breaks every 50 minutes to stretch or listen to music.

Take 2 hours off to eat lunch and go for a walk in the bush, or anything physical which would distract me from study.

Study from 2 until 6

Relax for the rest of the day, and try to get to bed by 10pm.

Question 18

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

Yes, always.

Question 19

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

Maths

I just did practice questions, over and over again.

I put important formulas up on the wall in my bedroom.

And for geometry questions, eg circle geometry, I drew my own diagrams to completely ingrain them in my head.

English

I wrote a practice essay and gave it to my teacher for comments, often a number of times for a single essay.

Then I would read the essay out loud a number of times.

Then summarise the essay, noting particularly the quotes, which I would read to myself repeatedly the night before the exam.

A few nights before the exam, I would write it out under test conditions, so I knew it was a good length.

Ancient History

I would read my notes aloud in my room, making sure to note down key dates. I would then read these key dates repeatedly the night before the exam, because I always had trouble with dates.

For the essay question I composed essay scaffolds for every bullet point. These took a long time to write, and a long time to memorise, so they had to be done in advance. The effort was reflected in my marks, but I could only invest so much time in this because I enjoyed the subject.

I shared these notes with the rest of my class, and certainly benefited from their improvements.

Extension History

I only memorised key quotes which summarised each historian’s views, reading them aloud as with other subjects.

Indonesian

I only memorised vocabulary, and I did this by noting down all my new words in class, then creating vocab lists in my free periods. In the morning on the bus I would read over these (obviously in me head). This was my secret weapon for learning languages, and I still use it at university.

Indonesian Extension

I watched and rewatched key scenes from the movie we were studying, and read out loud my notes on the techniques used in these scenes.

Question 20

When did you start preparing for your TRIAL exams?

I started writing essays and notes at least a term before they began. But I began memorising a month before.

Question 21

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

I kept my study routine regular, as it had been throughout the year. So, 6 days a week with approximately 8 hours a day. I refocused my time towards English and Ancient History, which were my main memorisation subjects.

Indonesian and Maths had required more time on a regular basis throughout the year, but once I built up skills in this area I could focus on my other subjects.

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 think I achieved the perfect balance; any more study would only have stressed me out. Keep it even across the year.

Question 23

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

Many of my friends crammed pretty heavily as we approached trials, but if this was the case they didn't perform as well; it's difficult to retain knowledge when you're stressed.

Question 24

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

Surprisingly, many people slacked off after trials, which is clearly a mistake. Because I continued my study at a regular pace, it truly felt as though my mind was building to its climax when exams arrived.

Question 25

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

I found them very accurate. However, for Extension History, I found I had accustomed to writing specifically for my teacher. In the Trial I received a full 50 out of 50 because I knew what she wanted, whereas my HSC exam mark was 43. This subject – similarly with English and Ancient and Modern history – is very subjective; the mistake I made was adhering to the specific demands of my teacher, instead of a general approach for all markers.

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?

I never suffered from anxiety in exams, and I feel this is solely because I knew my material and was very well prepared. This was part of my motivation to stay prepared, I knew how stressed I would be in an exam if I wasn't prepared.

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

Question 1

Which subject does this report relate to?

English Advanced

English Extension

Mathematics

Maths Extension

Ancient History

Extension History

Indonesian

Indonesian Extension

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?

I was confident in all of my subjects that I would receive a band 6, because I attained this consistently throughout the year.

Question 3

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

English

The belonging creative. I want to be a writer, so I feel confident about my ability. But I felt that the marking was just so subjective in this area. It took a lot of revising to create some adaptable pieces.

English Extension

Again the creative, because it was so subjective.

Ancient

The society, Persian society, because I was less familiar with this culture at the beginning.

Extension History

The first question of the exam. Again, subjectivity, it's difficult to give the marker what they want in such a broad subject.

Maths

Geometry, because I found some problems impenetrable; sometimes you just don't see the solution.

Maths Extension

Binomial theorem, because it was the last topic we covered and the new notation always felt a little bit alien.

Indonesian Continuers

Listening, by far. It's the most difficult to prepare for, because there is not a lot of material for Indonesian listening.

Indonesian Extension

Speaking, because the questions could be so varied.

Question 4

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

English and Extension

I would spend up to two weeks writing each essay.

Maths

No assessments

Indonesian

No assessments

Ancient History

I spent at least a week on my assessments.

Extension History

I would spend up to an hour on this most weeknights doing my project, because I enjoyed it I would leave it until last. It also required about two weeks in the holidays.

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).

English

Teacher

Maths

Textbook, teacher and friends

History

Teacher and own research

Indonesian

Teacher

Question 6

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

I have never used a tutor.

Question 7

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

I have never attended a tuition college.

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 teachers were all excellent, but I was lucky.

Question 10

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

Overall, it was mainly that I used my time wisely, I didn't waste time watching TV or on Facebook. For specific subjects, I think only in Indonesian, with revising my vocab on the bus.

Question 11

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

My only advantage was an ability to stay focused and not get distracted by the internet or TV.

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.

Ancient History and Extension History

In all honesty, I think I just had a bad exam for extension history; whatever I wrote isn't what the marker wanted on the day. In my school assessment I received 50/50 for the year in extension history, and I wrote in the same style in the exam. This is the reason I continued with 12 subjects until the end of the year, there is always the chance one examiner won't like your style, or you will have a bad exam.

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?

Yes only for Ancient History and Indonesian Extension

Ancient History

I probably spent over 50 hours on my ancient history notes and they covered half of the course. My entire class benefited from my notes, and I used other people's notes for the rest of the course. This way we could benefit from each other's specialities or particular interests.

Indonesian Extension

I wrote brief notes on the film we studied; this probably took me 5 hours.

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 swapped notes with my friends for ancient history. I found this very beneficial because the course is so large, it's just impossible to cover it all in sufficient detail by oneself. However, the topics which I didn't cover myself were always my weakest subjects and required extra attention at the end of the year.

Question 15

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

English and English Extension

I probably did 4 practice essays for each question. But no full exams.

Ancient History

1 practice paper.

Extension History

It was my last exam, and I had a week before the exam so about 8.

Maths

At least 20, and we worked through them steadily in class.

Indonesian

5, and I did every listening exam my teacher possessed, probably 10.

Indonesian Extension

None were available because the course had changed

Question 16

Which exam papers did you work through?

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

Just the past HSC papers. And any exams my teachers gave me.

Question 17

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

English and Extension: 2 each

Indonesian: 2

Maths: 10

History Extension: All of mine, 8.

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?

English

I spent all year revising my essays

But this meant I only had to spend 10 hours memorising them all up.

English Extension

Again, all year writing my essays and stories, but 10 hours to memorise.

Maths and Extension

An hour and a half every day for the month leading up to trials and HSC.

Indonesian

An hour or so every second day for the month leading up to the trials, and the same before HSC

Indonesian Extension

An hour or so every other day for the month leading up to the trials, and the same before HSC

Ancient History

2 hours day memorising notes once they were complete

Extension History

For trials, 10 hours.

For HSC: no time until I had my week break before the exam, then 5 hours a day for a week, about 25 hours.

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?

I had covered everything.

Question 20

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

Yes, all of it.

Question 21

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

Yes.

Question 22

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

No I just worked through them. Except Extension History, in which I devised some mnemonics to help my memory, as soon as I entered the exam I wrote down the historians I would use in chronological order, I've heard this referred to as a memory dump. After this I could fully engage with the question and I would write a scaffold of my answer.

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?

I don't think I made any mistakes, I'm perfectly happy with the trial and HSC went.

Question 24

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

English

The essays I had already written

Maths

The past papers with worked answers book.

Indonesian

My vocab lists and past papers on the internet

Ancient and Extension History

Mine and my friends notes

Question 25

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

English and Extension

Get your essays finished early and give them to a willing teacher or tutor for advice, you need to have multiple opinions on an English piece if you want all markers to receive it well.

Ancient History

Finish your notes early and memorise them at a continual rate. Half an hour a day is infinitely better than 10 hours in the last week.

Extension History

Choose something you enjoy for the project, because you will be living with it. Use the university libraries for research. For the final exams, just answer the past papers to develop an argument about the topics. I found it helpful to discuss the historical issues with friends to develop my opinion.

Indonesian and Extension

VOCAB! And it's something you can do at any time, eg on the bus. And if you need help with listening, there are some Indonesian news podcasts available online.

Maths

Do as many questions as possible, and note down anything you can't do. Then ask your teacher next time you see them, or a friend who knows their maths.

General Advice

Question 1

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

Most difficult for me was balancing having fun with completing my studies, but I soon learnt to manage this. I felt poorly organised at the beginning of the year, but learnt to organise myself quickly.

Question 2

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

No, I'm perfectly happy with the result I achieved, and I maintained a low level of stress throughout.

Question 3

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

How important it is to use your time wisely.

Question 4

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

Nothing I can think of.

Question 5

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

Use your time wisely. You don't get any happiness from an afternoon on Facebook, but there's a supreme satisfaction when you're taking a day off while everyone else is trying to study. You'll see the result in your marks as well.

The only thing I really learnt from the HSC is that hard work pays off. The HSC is about memorisation, repetitive maths exercises and rote learning. Your end mark is not a reflection of your intelligence, it simply the hours you put in.