

## Numbers or words?

I'm fairly confident when I say that over the period you have been studying for your ATT exams, whenever you have practiced questions, the vast majority have been numerical as opposed to written. And even when you did decide to do a written question you probably just jotted down some notes and then checked the answer – and then concluded that the question was easy.

What this means is that, for a lot of people, the real exam is the first time they've had to answer a written question in full, and given they've no prior experience, they panic – and lose marks.

Given that around half of the marks on the long form questions will be for written, as opposed to computational questions, they are a key part of passing this exam.

So here are a few tips.

- 1) You must practice written questions, the sooner the better. You've managed to get away with avoiding them until now, but no more excuses are acceptable.
- 2) Set aside the proper time allocation, and make sure you won't be disturbed.
- 3) Read, or more appropriately study, the requirement of the question. Make sure you understand exactly what the examiner is asking for, and more importantly, not asking for. So much time is wasted by students writing answers where the examiner has clearly stated (you are not required to.....).
- 4) Has the examiner specifically asked for something? Just because he has mentioned "penalties" in the requirement this is not a reason to write all you know about the subject. Which penalties is he referring to?
- 5) Decide whether the question is a generic one where you just write what you know, or is it one where you have to apply your knowledge to a scenario. With ATT it is most likely the latter.
- 6) If it is a scenario, make sure that you deal with each point in the question specifically, show the examiner that you've taken the time to read his question. He is very proud of it, as he spent a long time writing it.
- 7) This can be as simple as using information from the question in your answer. For example, if the question mentions that the client's name is John and asks you to write a letter, then start it "Dear John", it's obvious, but many people miss it.
- 8) Don't forget the correct format for a letter, addresses, dates etc – have a look at some answers to real exam questions on the ATT website to see what is acceptable.
- 9) When you are writing your response, **do not** look at the answer, even when you think you are stuck. Try as hard as you can to come up with a point, the more you do it, the more inspiration you will find. In any exam you will need to "scrape the barrel" and the more you've practised the easier it will become.
- 10) And in the words of the ubiquitous poster, "keep calm and carry on"!

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