The Calm Home-Ed Winter Mock Exam Checklist

A Stress-Free Parent Guide to Practising GCSE Past Papers at Home

By JCT Learning Hub | www.jctlearninghub.co.uk

Why Run Winter Mocks at Home?

A winter practice paper isn't a pass/fail verdict – it is a **diagnostic tool**. Six months before the Summer 2027 exams, your only goal is to spot pacing issues, practise exam phrasing and identify which topics need attention in the spring term.

Step 1: Before the Paper (Low-Stress Set Up)

- **[ ] Choose the right paper:** Download a genuine past paper (AQA, Pearson Edexcel, or OCR) along with its official **Mark Scheme** and **Examiner's Report**.
- **[ ] Pick a realistic pace:** Aim for **one paper per week** across November and December – never cram multiple subjects into one week.
- **[ ] Use their best energy window:** Schedule the paper when your teen is naturally alert (e.g. mid-morning rather than an arbitrary 8:45 am start).
- **[ ] Decide full vs. chunked timing:** Sit the full paper if they feel ready, or split it into two 45-minute sessions across two mornings to build stamina gradually.
- **[ ] Gather real exam kit:**
  - Black ballpoint pens (minimum two)
  - Scientific calculator (e.g. Casio ClassWiz) for calculator papers
  - Pencil, 30 cm ruler, protractor, and pair of compasses
  - Water bottle (label removed) and any preferred quiet sensory/fidget tools
- **[ ] Clear the space:** Move phones, revision guides, and notes to another room so they practise genuine memory retrieval.

Step 2: During the Session (Gentle Boundaries)

- **[ ] Set a Visual timer:** Use a silent countdown clock or tablet timer rather than a loud kitchen alarm.

- **[ ] Remind them of the "Skip & Return" rule:** If a question feels completely unfamiliar, circle the number, move on and come back if time allows – never get stuck on one question for 10 minutes.
- **[ ] Keep snacks & comfort welcome:** A warm drink or quiet snack at the table is completely fine – keep the atmosphere calm and supportive.
- **[ ] Note any pacing bottlenecks:** Jot down quietly if they ran out of time near the end or rushed the early questions.

Step 3: Marking & Reviewing (Growth Over Grades)

- **[ ] Step away first:** Leave marking until the next day so neither of you feels mentally fatigued.
- **[ ] Use the official mark scheme:** Look specifically for method marks (especially in Maths and Sciences), not just the final answer.
- **[ ] Highlight "3 Wins & Gaps":**
    a. **Three things done well** (e.g. clear working out, strong definitions, good time management).
    b. **Three priority topics** to revisit in January.
- **[ ] Check for "exam technique" slips:** Separate marks lost because they didn't know the content from marks lost by misreading command words (*describe, explain, evaluate*) or calculator errors.

Quick Reflection Box

Subject & Paper	Date Completed	3 Things That Went Well	Top 2-3 Topics for January
E.g. Edexcel Maths Paper 1F		1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
		1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.

Need Extra Support With GCSE Revision or Mock Feedback?

JCT Learning Hub provides calm, encouraging one-to-one tuition – in-home across Dorchester, Weymouth and Portland, and online nationwide. Whether your teen needs regular weekly support or a one-off session to mark and review winter practice papers in Maths, English, Sciences, History, Religious Studies, French or Functional Skills, we're here to help.

FREE REVISION CHECKLIST & ENQUIRIES: www.jctlearninghub.co.uk

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