

3 hours · 80 marks · 38 questions · 5 sections · 15 min reading time

The paper you are walking into

Set on the **rationalised NCERT syllabus** — nothing outside the textbook can appear. No overall choice; some questions carry an internal choice.

Section	Questions	Marks each	Total	Time to give it
A	20 (18 MCQ + 2 assertion-reason)	1	20	30 min
B	5 very short answer	2	10	20 min
C	6 short answer	3	18	35 min
D	4 long answer	5	20	45 min
E	3 case-based	4	12	30 min
Total	38	—	80	160 min + 20 to check

The day, hour by hour

When	What you do	Why it matters
Night before	Light recall of NCERT formulas only. Pack admit card, ID and the full geometry box. Sleep.	New topics now only raise anxiety; rest cuts careless errors.
Morning	Proper, familiar breakfast. Leave early. Skip the corridor comparisons.	Rushing spikes stress before you sit down.
Reading time (15 min)	Scan all 38, tag each easy / medium / hard, fix your order and section clock.	You start writing with a plan, not a surprise.
Last 20 min	Confirm nothing is unattempted, re-read the unsure ones, sanity-check answers.	A calm final pass rescues 2–4 marks.

The paper attempt order

Step	Do this	Why it works
1. Easy first	Attempt the questions you are sure of, in any order.	Banks marks early and settles the nerves.
2. Time to marks	90 s for a 1-mark, 11 min for a 5-mark.	Stops one question eating the time of five.
3. Accuracy over speed	Write every step. Method marks are real marks.	A wrong answer with correct working still scores.
4. Tough later	Mark it, move on, return with a clearer head.	One hard question is one question, not the paper.
5. Revise	Never leave a blank — there is no negative marking.	An attempt can earn; a blank cannot.

Four-second sanity check before you move on: $0 \leq P(E) \leq 1$ · lengths, areas and volumes are never negative · $\sin \theta$ and $\cos \theta$ stay within -1 to 1 · the mean lies between the smallest and largest value.

Key takeaways

- **Know the shape:** 3 hours, 80 marks, 38 questions, Sections A–E, 15 min reading time.
- **Revise NCERT, not new sources.** Every board question comes from the rationalised NCERT syllabus.
- **Sleep and packing are preparation** — do both the night before, not on the morning.
- **Bank sure marks first**, match time to marks, mark-and-move when a question stalls.
- **Show your working and never leave a blank.** There is no negative marking.

WORKED EXAMPLE · YOUR 180 MINUTES

Question: the paper is 80 marks in 180 minutes. How much time does each section get, and how much is left to check?

Step 1 – the rate. 180 minutes for 80 marks is **2.25 minutes per mark**. That is not the plan, but it is the sanity number – anything you spend far above a question's mark value is coming out of another question.

Step 2 – allocate by marks, then round to whole blocks. A (20 marks) **30** · B (10) **20** · C (18) **35** · D (20) **45** · E (12) **30**

Step 3 – add it up. $30 + 20 + 35 + 45 + 30 = 160$ minutes, so $180 - 160 = 20$ minutes to check.

Check: the marks add to $20 + 10 + 18 + 20 + 12 = 80$ ✓, and Section A gets 30 min for 20 one-mark questions – about **90 seconds each**, which is the right feel for an MCQ.

Write these five numbers on your question paper during reading time. Then you are checking a clock against a plan, not guessing.

WORKED EXAMPLE · WHY STEPS EARN MARKS

Question (3 marks): Find the roots of $2x^2 - 5x + 3 = 0$.

Step 1. $a = 2, b = -5, c = 3$, so $D = b^2 - 4ac = 25 - 24 = 1$. *½ mark for the discriminant*

Step 2. $x = (-b \pm \sqrt{D}) / 2a = (5 \pm 1) / 4$. *1 mark for the correct substitution*

Step 3. $x = 6/4 = 3/2$ or $x = 4/4 = 1$. *1 mark for both roots*

Check: $2(3/2)^2 - 5(3/2) + 3 = 4.5 - 7.5 + 3 = 0$ ✓ and $2 - 5 + 3 = 0$ ✓

A student who writes only “ $x = 3/2$, 1” and gets one root wrong scores almost nothing. The same student showing Steps 1–2 keeps most of the marks. This is what “show your working” is actually worth.

READING TIME · 15 MINUTES, SPENT

0–5 min: read every question once. No solving, no panic at Q31.

5–10 min: pencil an E, M or H beside each one. Most papers come out roughly half E, a third M, the rest H.

10–13 min: fix your order – all the E questions first, wherever they sit in the paper.

13–15 min: write your five section times in the margin and note which internal choices you will take.

WHERE THE MARKS ACTUALLY GO

Time, not knowledge. Fifteen minutes on one 3-mark question costs the two 5-mark questions you never reached.

Blanks. There is no negative marking, so an unattempted question is the only guaranteed zero on the paper.

Missing steps. Answer-only working throws away the method marks that survive an arithmetic slip.

Misreading. “Find the area of the *minor* segment” and “prove” versus “verify” are marks lost before any maths starts.

NOW TRY THIS ONE

You reach the last 20 minutes with Section D question 34 (5 marks) unattempted and two Section A answers you are unsure of. What is the right move, and what is it worth?

Answer: start question 34. Even a correct Given / To prove / construction and the first two steps of a proof earns method marks, while re-checking two 1-mark MCQs can win at most 2. Set-up marks on a 5-mark question beat a second look at 2 marks – then check the MCQs with whatever is left.

TIME CHECK · WHERE YOU SHOULD BE

Clock	Sections finished	Marks banked
50 min	A + B	30 of 80
85 min	A + B + C	48 of 80
130 min	A + B + C + D	68 of 80
160 min	All five	80 of 80, with 20 min to check

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