

Marks are awarded to the **steps** of a solution — not only to the final answer.

What the marking scheme rewards

What earns a mark	Why the examiner can award it
The method or formula	Naming the rule you are about to use is often worth a mark on its own.
Correct substitution	It shows the formula was applied to the right numbers.
The final answer	Usually with the correct units and a stated conclusion.
Clear presentation	Working that cannot be followed cannot be credited.
A valid alternative	More than one correct route to the answer generally earns the marks too.

Where the marks live, section by section

Section	Q × marks	Total	How it is marked
A — MCQ & Assertion–Reason	20 × 1	20	Answer only. No working to credit.
B — very short answer	5 × 2	10	One key step plus the answer.
C — short answer	6 × 3	18	Method, substitution, answer.
D — long answer	4 × 5	20	Marks spread across every step.
E — case study	3 × 4	12	Sub-parts, each with its own steps.

3 hours · 38 questions · **80 marks** + 20 internal assessment. There are no 4-mark questions outside Section E.

Method marks: the marks a wrong answer keeps

A 3-mark question is not one decision worth three marks — it is three chances to earn one. Get the method right and slip on the arithmetic and you keep the method marks. Write the answer alone and get it wrong and there is nothing on the page to award.

The rule that follows: never do a step in your head. A step done silently is a mark you have earned and not claimed.

The NCERT and CBSE scope of it

NCERT decides what can be asked. Every question is set on the rationalised NCERT syllabus — seven units, fourteen chapters — so the textbook examples and exercises are the best guide to the *style* of question you will face.

CBSE decides how the marks split. An official marking scheme is published alongside every sample paper and past paper. Reading a paper next to its marking scheme is the fastest way to see where each mark sits.

Laying out an answer so every mark is claimable

- Label the question and part number clearly, and start a long answer where it has room to run.
- One step per line, in order. Two steps merged into one line is one line the examiner can only mark once.
- Underline or box the final answer, with its units, so the last mark is impossible to miss.
- Wrong working: strike it through with a single line. Scribbled-over work cannot be read, and unreadable work cannot be credited.

Key takeaways

- Marks are allocated **step by step**, so a small slip at the end need not cost the whole question.
- **Method marks are real marks.** They are awarded for the approach, whatever the final number.
- State the formula **before** you use it — that line frequently carries a mark by itself.
- Section A gives you nothing for working; **Sections B to E** are where showing steps pays.
- Include **units and a final statement**. The last mark is lost more often than the first.

Writing for the marks

The same question, marked twice — and a 5-mark answer written the way a board answer is written

SECTION C · 3 MARKS

Find the sum of the first 20 terms of the AP 5, 8, 11, ...

Full-marks answer

Here $a = 5$, $d = 8 - 5 = 3$, $n = 20$.

$S_n = n/2 [2a + (n - 1)d]$ ← **formula stated: 1 mark**

$S_{20} = 20/2 [2(5) + 19(3)] = 10 [10 + 57]$ ← **substitution: 1 mark**

$S_{20} = 10 \times 67 = 670$ ← **correct answer: 1 mark**

THE SAME QUESTION, ONE SLIP

A student writes the formula, substitutes correctly, then computes 19×3 as 47 and finishes with $10 \times 57 = 570$. The answer is wrong. **The first two marks are still awarded**, because the formula and the substitution are on the page and both are right — **2 out of 3**.

A second student writes only "570". Same misunderstanding, same slip, **0 out of 3**. That gap is the whole reason to show working.

SECTION D · 5 MARKS

A train travels 360 km at a uniform speed. If the speed had been 5 km/h more, the journey would have taken 1 hour less. Find the speed of the train.

Let the speed be x km/h, where x is positive.

Time at x km/h = $360/x$ hours; time at $(x + 5)$ km/h = $360/(x + 5)$ hours.

$360/x - 360/(x + 5) = 1$ ← **equation formed: 2 marks**

$360(x + 5) - 360x = x(x + 5) \Rightarrow 1800 = x^2 + 5x$

$x^2 + 5x - 1800 = 0$ ← **standard form**

$D = 5^2 + 4(1800) = 7225$, $\sqrt{7225} = 85 \Rightarrow x = (-5 \pm 85)/2$ ← **solving: 2 marks**

$x = 40$ or $x = -45$. Speed cannot be negative, so $x = 40$.

The speed of the train is 40 km/h. ← **rejection + statement: 1 mark**

Check: $360/40 = 9$ h and $360/45 = 8$ h — exactly 1 hour less. Writing this line costs ten seconds and catches a wrong root before the examiner does.

WHERE THE MARKS ACTUALLY GO

- Answer written with no working — nothing left to credit when it is wrong.
- Formula used but never named — the easiest mark on the question, skipped.
- The negative root not rejected — the last mark on a 5-marker.
- Units or the final sentence missing — a complete solution marked incomplete.
- Working crammed, out of order or overwritten — steps that cannot be followed cannot be awarded.

NOW TRY THIS ONE

Find the 20th term *from the last term* of the AP 3, 8, 13, ..., 253. Write the formula line first, then substitute.

Answer: $l - (n - 1)d = 253 - 19(5) = 158$. (The AP has 51 terms, so this is also the 32nd term from the start — either route earns full marks.)

Practise the way you will be marked — on examfront

- **Chapter 1 is free** — start today, no payment needed.
- **Mistake identification** — see exactly where your marks leak, question by question.
- **Anytime tests** — practise any topic the moment you finish studying it.
- **Weekly tests** — keep every chapter alive instead of relearning it in March.
- **Mock tests before the exam** — full papers under real timing, marked the way CBSE marks.

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