

How to Solve a Class 10 Maths Sample Paper

A smart attempt strategy for the CBSE Class 10 Maths paper — page 1 of 2

Three hours is **180 minutes** for **80 marks** — about **2 minutes a mark**, with **15 minutes** held back to check.

The attempt sequence

Step	When	What you actually do
Scan	Reading time	Read it all. Tag the sure marks and the hard ones.
Secure	First 30–40 min	Bank the marks you are certain of, wherever they sit.
Solve	The main block	Work the sections in order; D and E get their time.
Stretch	Second pass	Return to the flagged ones. Attempt every single one.
Check	Last 15 min	No blanks, no misreads, no impossible answers.

The principle: never let a hard early question eat the time that easy later marks needed.

The paper you are attempting, and the clock

Section	Questions	Marks each	Section marks	Time to plan for
A	20	1	20	41 min
B	5	2	10	21 min
C	6	3	18	37 min
D	4	5	20	41 min
E	3	4	12	25 min
Total	38	—	80	165 min + 15 to check

Internal choices sit in Sections B to E; there is no overall choice. The paper is not uniformly hard either — by CBSE's design **43** of the 80 marks test Remembering and Understanding, **19** Applying, **18** Analysing, Evaluating and Creating.

Where the marks are won and thrown away

Reading time is free marks. CBSE gives 15 minutes before the clock starts. Scan the whole paper, tag what you can do immediately, and flag what will need thought — you start writing with a map instead of a surprise.

Method marks are real marks. In Sections B to E the examiner awards your working, not only the final answer — slip at the last line and the method marks are still yours.

There is no negative marking. A blank earns nothing, a partial method can earn something — and check the internal choice before you struggle.

Nothing is outside NCERT. Seven units, fourteen chapters, Constructions dropped. A question that stops you is maths you have met, asked unfamiliarly — so the fix is the NCERT exercise, not a new book.

Weightage is set by unit, not by chapter: Algebra 20, Geometry 15, Trigonometry 12, Statistics & Probability 11, Mensuration 10, Number Systems 6, Coordinate Geometry 6 = 80. Chapter percentages circulating online are unofficial estimates.

Key takeaways

- ▶ Use all **15 minutes** of reading time — scan, tag, flag.
- ▶ Secure the marks you are certain of first — the order is yours to choose.
- ▶ Spend time in proportion to marks: about **2 minutes a mark**.
- ▶ Stuck? Mark it, move on, come back — and check the internal choice.
- ▶ **Never leave a blank** — there is no negative marking.
- ▶ Hold **15 minutes** back to check: no skips, no misreads.

One paper, three hours — and one 5-mark answer

The plan on the clock, then the working that earns every mark — page 2 of 2

Marks are awarded for **the method on the page**, not for the answer in your head.

STEP 1 · THE CLOCK

Clock	What you are doing	Target
-15 to 0 min	Reading time	Scan all 38 questions; tag sure marks and hard ones
0 – 41 min	Section A + your tagged sure marks	20 marks banked
41 – 62 min	Section B	30 marks
62 – 99 min	Section C	48 marks
99 – 140 min	Section D	68 marks
140 – 165 min	Section E case studies	80 marks attempted
165 – 180 min	Final check	No blanks, no misreads, no impossible answers

STEP 2 · A 5-MARK QUESTION, WORKED IN FULL

Q. A train travels 360 km at a uniform speed. If the speed had been 5 km/h more, it would have taken 1 hour less for the same journey. Find the speed of the train. (*Section D, 5 marks*)

Step 1 — Let the speed be x km/h. Time at x is $360/x$ hours; time at $(x + 5)$ is $360/(x + 5)$ hours.

Step 2 — Form the equation. The faster trip is 1 hour shorter: $360/x - 360/(x + 5) = 1$.

Step 3 — Clear the denominators. $360(x + 5) - 360x = x(x + 5) \Rightarrow 1800 = x^2 + 5x \Rightarrow x^2 + 5x - 1800 = 0$.

Step 4 — Solve. $D = 5^2 - 4(1)(-1800) = 25 + 7200 = 7225$, and $\sqrt{7225} = 85$. So $x = (-5 \pm 85)/2$, giving $x = 40$ or $x = -45$.

Step 5 — Reject and state. Speed cannot be negative, so $x = -45$ is rejected. **The speed of the train is 40 km/h.**

Check: $360/40 = 9$ hours and $360/45 = 8$ hours — exactly 1 hour less. Write this line down; it costs ten seconds and catches a wrong root.

STEP 3 · WHERE THOSE 5 MARKS ACTUALLY SIT

Indicatively, a paper like this splits the marks across the working: **2** for forming the correct equation, **2** for solving it correctly, and **1** for rejecting the negative root and stating the answer with its unit. Four ways students give marks back:

- ▶ Jumping straight to " $x^2 + 5x - 1800 = 0$ " with no line showing where it came from — the 2 forming marks are unclaimable.
- ▶ Getting $x = 40$ and never writing why -45 is rejected — that is a mark, not a formality.
- ▶ Dropping the unit. " 40 " is not a speed.
- ▶ Rubbing out a wrong attempt entirely. Cross it out with one line instead; unmarked work cannot earn, but neither can erased work.

STEP 4 · NOW TRY THIS ONE

A train covers 480 km at a uniform speed. If the speed had been 8 km/h less, the journey would have taken 3 hours more. Find the speed. Set it out in the same five steps, and finish with the check line.

Answer: $x^2 - 8x - 1280 = 0$, $D = 5184$, $\sqrt{5184} = 72$, so $x = 40$ (rejecting -32). **40 km/h** — check: $480/40 = 12$ h and $480/32 = 15$ h, exactly 3 hours more.

Practise the attempt, not just the maths

- ▶ **Chapter 1 is free** on examfront — start today, no payment.
- ▶ **Mistake identification** tells you which marks you lost to concept, method, calculation, misreading and time — and which are recoverable.
- ▶ **Anytime tests** let you rehearse one section under the clock instead of a whole paper.
- ▶ **Weekly tests** keep the habit honest and show the trend, paper after paper.
- ▶ **Mock tests** before the exam put you in the full three-hour attempt you have been training for.

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