

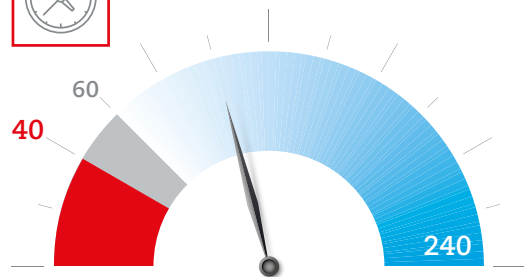
How to approach the Strategic Business Leader (SBL) exam

A big factor in success in SBL is having an effective approach to the exam. You need to practise and build up confidence in your exam technique. The article [Examining Team Guidance](#) talks about this in detail, but here are some quick tips on how to:

- Manage your time
- Read the exam paper effectively
- Plan and write answers

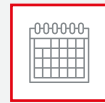


Time management




- You should spend at least 40 minutes and up to 60 minutes on reading and overall planning.
- Divide the remaining 200 minutes by 80 (ie the "technical" marks, as the professional skills do not require any additional writing). This gives 2.5 minutes per "technical" mark.


If you spend 60 minutes on the initial reading and planning this leaves 180 minutes, so 2.25 minutes per technical mark.



Effective reading and planning (40-60min)


There is a lot to read in the exam. Follow this suggested path to deal with the volume of information in the most effective way.

1 Read the case background to understand the organisation and the context. 


2 Review the list of exhibits to understand what extra information is available. 

3 Read and annotate the requirements to identify what you are being asked to do, specifically:

- Your role
- Format required (illustrated in the article [The importance of effective communication](#))
- Audience
- Verb(s)
- Mark allocation – note time allowed, and number of points you need to make
- Professional skill
- Any model or framework that will help you identify points

These points can start to form an outline plan for your answer to each task. 

4 Move on to active reading of the exhibits:

- Identify links to tasks
- Annotate/highlight key points
- Add notes to answer plans. 



Planning and completing each task (180-200min)

- Review requirement key words again.
- Make sure your plan has identified the answer format, headings and brief notes on the points you want to include.

Report

To: Rail Co. Trust Board
 From: Assistant auditor [your stated role]
 Subject: Evaluation of the passenger survey results and reviews the performance of Rail Co.


Introduction
 Evaluation of passenger survey results

Performance Review
 Actual

Relative performance

Conclusions
 Appendix: Analysis of results

- Write up your final answer.
- One or two sentences should be sufficient for each mark. The articles [Professional Skills Marking Guide](#) and [Read the mind of the SBL marker](#) illustrate what is expected by markers.

Remember that the right practice and confidence in your exam technique will lead you to success in the exam. 

“My advice is to do lots of exam technique practice. I wish I had done [this] sooner, I was too focused on learning the content when the exam is a lot about application.”

Strategic Business Leader candidate, September 2018

- Further insights are given in the article [10 things to learn from SBL's September sitting](#) and the webinar [Specimen exam 3 debrief](#).