

Supporting your child through their English GCSE

The Exams (Exam board: AQA)			
English Language			
Paper	Length	% of GCSE	Exam Date
Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing	1 h 45 minutes	50	23 rd May 2024 (am)
Paper 2: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives	1 h 45 minutes	50	6 th June 2024 (am)
English Literature			
Paper	Length	% of GCSE	Exam Date
Paper 1: Shakespeare and the 19 th Century Novel	1 h 45 minutes	50	13 th May 2024 (am)
Paper 2: Modern Texts and Poetry	2 h 15 minutes	50	20 th May 2024 (am)

With the next round of Mock Examinations approaching, many students in year 11 will have increasing workload across all subjects. It is crucial that they are supported to maintain healthy and productive independent working routines to provide them with the best chance of achieving the best possible grades for their next steps after year 11. With that in mind, the English department have put together some key information regarding their examinations in English, as well as some top tips and resources that may be of interest.

Supporting your child with revising for English

Revision is vital for all students but it can lead to a great deal of stress and anxiety. We've included some tips below for parents/carers:

- Encourage your child to start revision early. There is a lot of content to cover, in addition to their other subjects. Leaving it too late will only add to stress and time pressure.
- Help your child to be organised by creating and using a revision timetable.
- Make sure your child is spacing out the different topics over the whole of the revision timetable.
- Ask your child if you can help them to revise: test them on their knowledge, chat to them about their revision over dinner, use flashcards to help them learn quotes and quiz them on their memory.
- Encourage your child to attend revision sessions*.
- Remind your child that it is not enough just to attend a revision session – they must do their own revision too.
- Prompt them to take regular breaks, stay hydrated, eat a balanced diet and aim for good quality sleep every night.

Key Dates for English	
January	18 th : Year 11 Parents' Evening 24 th Revision Evening Create a revision timetable
February	Revision should begin to pick up-preparation for Mock 2 and 3
After Spring half term	Mock 2: w/b 26 th Feb: Literature Paper 1, Language Paper 2) After School revision sessions to begin*
March	Revision should be in full swing; by now it should be habitual, daily practise
	Mock 3: w/b 18 th March: Literature Paper 2, Language Paper 1
May & June	GCSE Examinations across all subjects (see dates above for English)
August	GCSE Results day

*subject to staffing: day and timetable tbc

Exam Content			
English Language			
Paper	Section A – 40 marks		Section B – 40 marks
Paper 1: ONE extract of unseen fiction	Questions to test reading comprehension and ability to comment on writer's methods (language and structure). Mostly short answer questions, with one essay-style question focusing on forming a critical viewpoint of the text.		One piece of descriptive OR narrative (story) writing. There will be a choice of two tasks, one of which will provide a picture as inspiration for their writing.
Paper 2: TWO extracts of unseen Non-Fiction. One of these will be 19 th Century Non Fiction	Questions to test reading comprehension and ability to summarise key information, comment on the writer's use of language for effect and compare both sources.		One piece of transactional writing (letter, leaflet, article, speech or essay) in which students must present their own opinion on a topic provided by the exam board. In the past, topics have included: sports, fast fashion, travel and fame.
English Literature			
Paper	Section A		Section B
Paper 1: Macbeth AND A Christmas Carol	ONE essay question Students will be provided with a short extract from the Shakespeare text they have studied and asked to respond to a question about character, theme or setting. They will be expected to refer to the play as a whole and will need to know key quotes off by heart.		ONE essay question Students will be provided with a short extract from the novel and asked to respond to a question about character, theme or setting. They will be expected to refer to the novel as a whole and will need to know key quotes off by heart.
Paper 2	Section A	Section B	Section C
Paper 2: An Inspector Calls AND Power and Conflict poetry AND Unseen Poetry	A choice of two essay questions. Students must choose ONE to answer There is no extract provided for the modern text, but the questions will ask students to consider EITHER character OR Theme, giving them a choice. They will be expected to refer to the text as a whole and will need to know key quotes off by heart	ONE essay question. Students will be given a copy of one of the 15 poems they have studied in depth to explore a theme (broadly, either POWER or CONFLICT) in that named poem AND one other poem from the anthology. Students will not have their anthologies in the exam but will be expected to refer to the second poem as well as the named one. They will need to know key quotes off by heart	ONE essay question. Students will be given a copy of a poem they have not read before and required to answer an essay question on how the poet explores an idea or theme. A shorter-form question in which students have to compare how the idea or theme is presented in two unseen poems. Students are not able to prepare for the content of this section (the poems are deliberately obscure as they are meant to be analysed without prior knowledge). However, students will be expected to apply a range of techniques and analytical skills to the two poems. They can practise this with any unseen literature extracts.

Useful English Revision Tips and Resources

Copies of the CGP Text and Revision guides are available to purchase from your child's teacher.

As a school, we are able to purchase these at a price lower than typical RRP, and would like to pass these savings on to benefit our students. Your son/daughter will need to have in-depth knowledge of four set texts for their Literature exam. Each text guide is sold at £4 (RRP £5.95) and the Language Revision Guide is sold at £6 (RRP £12). If you would like to purchase these, please enclose the exact amount in cash in a sealed envelope, with your child's name on and pass to their English teacher.

Watching adaptations of a text (either stage or screen) can be invaluable tools to aid memory and understanding. Many of the key texts have film versions available to access via streaming services such as Amazon Prime. Be aware, however that watching a film will not further or develop understanding of the text alone, many adaptations change the script, story, or sometimes both. It is recommended that watching an adaptation of a text is used as a starting point for active revision, not the sum total of the revision itself.

Active Revision

Just reading a text or a revision guide is unlikely to be enough to improve their understanding of a topic or to remember the information or quotes. Instead, encourage your child to engage in active revision. This may be as simple as completing regular exam-style questions (these can be accessed via the AQA website, or in revision guides. Teachers also set these as regular homework tasks). Making flashcards to test themselves (or have you test them!) can also be very useful, particularly for learning quotes or Linguistic and Literary terminology. Regular practise and retrieval is far more effective long term than 'cramming' a lot of information in all at once!

Useful websites

Seneca Learning. This is a free online learning tool, which introduces key information by topic with knowledge quizzes to test understanding and recall. Direct your child towards AQA English Language and Literature courses

<https://app.senecalearning.com/courses?Price=Free>

YouTube. This site has a wealth of video content related to English. Many teachers upload lesson videos and in-depth guides to texts and exam technique.

Mr Bruff is a particularly comprehensive content creator: <https://www.youtube.com/user/mrbruff>

BBC Bitesize. Has lots of content for both Language and Literature, including video clips and quizzes. Just be sure to select AQA.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/examspecs/zcbchv4>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/examspecs/zxqncwx>