

## Revising in English: guidance for Year 11 pupils, parents and carers

Dear Parent/Carer,

We recognise that Year 11 can be a stressful time for both pupils and those who support them! This document aims to help by offering information about how best to support your son, as well as answering questions that you may have about English and revision.

### **What English specifications is my son sitting?**

AQA GCSE English Language (8700) and AQA GCSE English Literature (8702).

This means 2 separate GCSEs and 4 examinations:

<b>GCSE English Language</b>	<b>GCSE English Literature</b>
Paper 1 – 1 hr 45 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reading questions on unseen fiction</li><li>• Imaginative writing task</li></ul>	Literature Paper 1 - 1hr 45 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Macbeth essay based on an extract</li><li>• A Christmas Carol essay based on an extract</li></ul>
Paper 2 – 1 hr 45 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reading questions on 2 unseen non-fiction texts</li><li>• Non-fiction writing task (letter, article, etc.)</li></ul>	Literature Paper 2 - 2hrs 15 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lord of the Flies / An Inspector Calls essay</li><li>• Essay comparing 2 of 15 poems</li><li>• Essay on 2 unseen poems</li></ul>

School Assessment Dates:

- wb 10<sup>th</sup> Dec 2018 – Macbeth essay (homework)
- wb 28<sup>th</sup> Jan 2019 – Christmas Carol essay
- wb 11<sup>th</sup> Feb 2019 – Poetry essay
- Wb 25<sup>th</sup> Feb 2019 – Language Papers 1 and 2 mock examinations
- wb 26<sup>th</sup> Mar 2019 – Lord of the Flies / An Inspector Calls essay

Provisional GCSE examination dates:

- 15<sup>th</sup> May 2019 (PM) – Literature Paper 1
- 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2019 (AM) – Literature Paper 2
- 4<sup>th</sup> June 2019 (AM) – Language Paper 1
- 7<sup>th</sup> June 2019 (AM) – Language Paper 2

### **What should I/my son be revising in English?**

It is a myth to say that you cannot revise for English. With 4 exams, 7 hours 30 minutes of exam time and the fact that books can no longer be taken into examinations, effective revision is extremely important.

<b>GCSE English Language</b>	<b>GCSE English Literature</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Language and Structure terminology.</li><li>• The features of different types of writing.</li><li>• Reading challenging texts – fiction and non-fiction.</li><li>• Practice planning and writing under timed conditions.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All literature texts – Macbeth, A Christmas Carol, Lord of the Flies/An Inspector Calls, 15 AQA Power and Conflict poems.</li><li>• WHAT? – Plot, characters, key themes and ideas</li><li>• HOW? - A few key quotations, language techniques, some analysis of writers' choices</li><li>• WHY? - How writers use the plot and characters to explore ideas and present ideas to their readers.</li></ul>

## How should I/my son revise?

- Little and often! Research shows that cramming does not work. Doing twenty minutes every day is better than 2 hours at once. Mixing up or interleaving topics also helps. Make a timetable and stick to it!
- Actively! Re-reading and highlighting is not very effective. The brain remembers best when it has to work. Making flashcards, quizzing and writing new notes are all more effective methods.
- Read! All English exams involve challenging reading material which needs to be read quickly and securely understood. Pupils should read for 20 minutes a day, challenging themselves to read more difficult books - *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* or anything read in primary school or KS3 are not sufficient! Once or twice a week, pupils should also read non-fiction such as broadsheet newspaper articles – preferably from the opinion section, where the writer presents their point of view on a topic. After reading, summarise key ideas in bullet points and practise analysing some language and structure choices.
- Practise descriptive writing. Prepare descriptive pieces about an interesting character, an interesting place and something changing. Redraft these until they are the very best you can do and don't forget to use accurate and varied SPaG – it is worth 32 marks across both papers! Then practise adapting these for different exam questions.
- Make a set of revision notes for each text. You could make notes on **plot, key characters, key themes, historical context, and key quotations**.
- Practise planning responses to questions from past papers. Planning 6 responses takes less time than writing one but lets you explore more ideas.
- Practise writing some examination responses under timed conditions – you need to build up speed and stamina for exams in which you are expected to write at length and without stopping.

## What resources are available to help?

- Revision guides for all literature set texts, unseen poetry and the language exams. Many pupils have purchased these but few use them effectively. They are packed with information, quiz questions, sample answers and exam tasks. Speak to your English teacher if you want to purchase any.
- The P drive – the *Pupil drive* → *English* → *GCSE Revision* folder has lots of revision aids, including past exam papers, revision booklets, knowledge organisers, collections of quotations and more!
- The VLE – many of these resources can also be accessed via the VLE and there are links to Doodle and PiXL resources (see below).
- PiXL Independence booklets (on P drive and VLE) – there are booklets for all Literature and Language examinations. They contain a mixture of shorter quizzes, longer tasks and prompts for further reading. There are even answer booklets so pupils can check their own progress.
- PiXL Knowledge Organisers for all literature texts and language questions (on VLE).
- PiXLit App – app with quizzes on literature topics, which also tracks progress. See English teachers for details about logging on.
- Doodle – a web-based resource with access to hundreds of revision presentations and quizzes ([www.doodlelearn.co.uk](http://www.doodlelearn.co.uk)).
- YouTube - **Mr Bruff** and **Stacey Reay** have excellent channels on your set texts which will give you lots of information.
- Newspapers – the Guardian, The Telegraph and the Independent can be read for free online or through apps.