



# How to prepare for your GCSE English Exams

aka

Being independent in my revision, taking control of these exams and being absolutely brilliant in the process!

## You can do this!

You are already revising in class and are covering all of the skills that you need to answer each question through a wide range of activities. Make sure you know how each skill you revise fits into your exam. In class you are:

- ✓ Writing practice answers and receiving feedback
- ✓ Acting on feedback from your mocks and classwork
- ✓ Looking at model answers
- ✓ Completing timed answers
- ✓ Revising texts for your literature papers
- ✓ Exploring a range of stimulus texts for your language papers
- ✓ Attending after school revision sessions

### Revising at home- being independent

Set aside regular, short blocks of time for revision. Keep tasks achievable in the time you've set. Practise writing against the clock regularly- it helps you to get better at it. In the next few pages are a number of suggestions of activities you can include as part of your revision programme. They're there to guide you. Listen to the advice of your teacher too. She/he will be able to advise you on your own strengths and weaknesses and guide you towards your own areas to improve.

## English Language Paper 1 – 1hr 45mins

**Explorations in creative reading and writing**

**Q1-4 – Reading Skills = 40 marks**

**Q5 – Writing skills = 40 marks**

Suggested revision tasks:

Read the opening pages of a novel and complete the following tasks:

- Pick out 4 details from the first 10 lines that introduce you to a character or setting.
- Pick a paragraph and identify any language or techniques that the writer has used to create an effect. Consider why the writer might have made this choice and the effect on the reader.
- Using the whole extract you have read, focus on the structure: how does it open? How does it develop? Where and why does the writer change focus? Have specific structural devices been identified?
- Pick one of these statements:
  1. 'The opening is mysterious/shocking/engaging/intense.'
  2. The character is intriguing/disturbing/inspiring/surprising

Now put together your response to the statement. Do you agree or disagree and why?

- Mind map four reasons why you agree or disagree and use details from the text to explain why you think this.

- Using your mind map now write up your ideas into a written response to the statement that explains your ideas and opinions in detail. Remember to use technical terminology where needed.
- Pick out a picture from a photo album, your phone, the internet or from a magazine:
  1. Let the picture inspire you to write a story or description.
  2. Plan a few ideas with a mind map. How will you create an engaging opening? How will you keep your reader's interest? How will your writing develop? How will it end?
  3. Write a list of the language devices you can use in your writing. Do you need to revise any of them?
  4. Create a list of the punctuation you could use for effect.
  5. Plan a list of sentence structures and how you will use them for effect.
  6. Write a practice piece of writing.
  7. Look back over your writing and up-level it in a different colour. Focus on the impact of your vocabulary choices. How is the reader responding to your writing – put yourself in their shoes.

## English Language Paper 2 - 1hr 45mins

**Viewpoints and perspectives.**

**Q1-4 – Reading Skills = 40 marks**

**Q5 – Writing skills = 40 marks**

Suggested revision tasks

Read non-fiction regularly:

- Good quality newspapers are the best source of material because they contain a broad selection of topics in their articles, adverts, reviews, opinion pieces and on their websites.
- You will also find it useful to look at some travel biographies, autobiographies and even blogs.
- You can buy physical newspapers or look at articles online via websites such as [www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk) and [www.thetimes.co.uk](http://www.thetimes.co.uk)
- Find two articles with a common theme and complete the following tasks:
  1. Ask someone to read one article and to write a list of statements, some true, some false. Tick the true statements.
  2. Read both articles and summarise the differences between them in two bullet pointed lists.
  3. Identify language choices/technical devices/sentence structures that the writer has used to create an impact.

Consider why the writer has made these choices and the effect on the reader.

4. Reread both articles. Make a list of the main ideas in each text. Consider the writer's attitudes and how the writer conveys them.
5. Highlight evidence in the text to support the two lists.
6. Write a list of connectives that explore similarities and differences.
7. Write a response to the articles that compares both texts and the writers' attitudes.

- Pick one item from each column below:

<b>Text</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Letter	Parents	Explain
Blog	Teenagers	Argue
Article	School	Persuade
Speech	Adults	Inform
Newspaper Article		

1. Using the topic from another non-fiction article, plan some ideas that show your point of view on this topic.
2. Write a list of the language devices you will use and the effect they will have on the reader.
3. Plan carefully how the opening to your text will set the tone and engage your reader.
4. Draft a practise piece of writing.
5. Reflect and up-level your writing in another colour pen. Consider the impact of your vocabulary choices on the

reader. What effect does your writing have on the reader? Put yourself in their shoes.