

A Parents' Guide to the new Linear GCSE English Language and GCSE Literature Assessments 2015-17

As you are aware, both GCSE Language and GCSE Literature are now 100% examination, with the 2 separate qualifications being taken in the summer of Year 11.

All students are taking the 2 separate qualifications (GCSE English Literature *and* GCSE English Language) which are untiered. Please note that these exams will be graded 9-1.

The exam board is [Eduqas](#).

Students receive a copy of all the Literature texts they are studying and study guides where available. If no hard copies of study guides exist, a list of recommended websites is listed below.

<http://www.sparknotes.com/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/>

Students will also continue to receive information and tasks through their 'Show My Homework' account and they can also register with 'Quizlet' to receive revision materials.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. My daughter /son was disappointed in their English Literature trial exam result: Why was her/his mark lower than expected?

- Every student has been given a question specific feedback sheet that tells them exactly where the weaknesses were in their performance. It would be really useful to look at this with them.
- Students' marks were lower than those they have been receiving in their termly assessments as for the trials we included all the papers: some students found it difficult to sustain concentration/ maintain quality over 2 hours and 30 minutes.
Also, they lacked the specific quotations needed for each text in order to achieve the higher grades.
- In this new GCSE specification there is no coursework which means students cannot enter the exam room with the 'cushion' of a certain percentage of marks already being 'banked': rigorous revision is crucial. It was very apparent that some students had either not revised or they need support with the process.
- No exam boards are issuing grade boundaries until all the papers have been marked after the summer exams: in order to work out where the boundaries were for the trial exams we used the Ofqual Indicative Boundaries which are very challenging compared to previous exam series. For example, a 9 is 99-100%, a 6 is 78-88%, a 5 is 67-77% and a 3 is 41-55%.

2. How can I help my child revise for the English Literature exam? ('An Inspector Calls' or Blood Brothers' or 'A Taste of Honey' + 'A Christmas Carol' + 'Romeo and Juliet' and the poetry anthology)

- Read the plays together as a family
- Help in the learning of contextual information for 'A Christmas Carol' and the poems in the anthology
- Assist in the learning of key quotations, by reading out lines from the plays and novels and asking:
 - a) Who said it?
 - b) To whom they are speaking?
 - c) What is happening in that interaction?
- Encourage them to attend the lunchtime poetry sessions hosted by Ms Mc Call in E2 Monday-Thursday starting w/b 27/3.
- Encourage them to use the Poetry Revision booklet we have created.

3. How much revision should they be doing?

- They will be receiving weekly homework tasks through 'Show my Homework'.
- They will also need to know quotations as there is a new emphasis on direct textual support in exam responses.

4. Should I be worrying about spelling and punctuation?

- There is a renewed emphasis on accuracy in English Literature and there are now up to 5 'bonus' marks for Spelling/Punctuation/Grammar in Component 1 Section A The Shakespeare essay and Component 2 Section A ('An Inspector Calls' or 'Blood Brothers' or 'A Taste of Honey')
- GCSE English Language continues to place importance on Spelling/Punctuation/Vocabulary range in the 2 Writing papers
- There is a list of 101 commonly misspelt words included at the end of this document

5. Are there any marks for Speaking and Listening?

- No, in the sense that there are no marks for it any more but it is still a compulsory component in which students have to deliver a speech to the class and respond to questions. It must be videoed and students will receive a certificate with Pass, Merit or Distinction at the same time they receive their GCSE grades.

6. What is happening with GCSE English Language as there was no trial exam?

- Students have been preparing for the English Language exam throughout Year 10 by learning how to write:
Formal Letters/Informal Letters/Job application letters

Stories

Leaflets

Reviews

Speeches

Reports

Articles

We will be revising these types of writing in the run up to summer exams.

- In lessons we are now focusing on how to answer the reading papers.
- We have organised a 'walk-through' trial exam on Friday 21st April when students will be rehearsing the timings for Component 2 English Language (Section A Reading Non-Fiction: 1 hour and Section B Writing Non-Fiction :1 hour). It will start during registration and continue through lessons 1 and 2 (With Maths lessons 3 and 4)
- Preparation for Component 1 will take place in lessons (Reading Fiction : 1 hour /Writing Fiction 45 minutes)

7. How can students revise for English Language?

- They need to know the conventions for all the writing types listed in bold above : including layout/openings/ending for Component 2 Section B (Writing Non-Fiction)
- They need to pay special attention to the film review they wrote in Year 10 as this could be used in the real exam (Component 2 Section B :Writing Non-Fiction)
- They need to 'learn' the job application letter they will have written in their lesson .
- They need to revise key spellings (see attachment for the words most commonly spelt wrongly in exams)
- They need to learn the school address, including correct spelling /capitalisation and punctuation, to use if one of the tasks in Component 2 Section B is a formal letter.
- They need to know all the punctuation types and their purposes (see separate document)

101 Common Spelling Mistakes

A according, accommodation, across, against, although, ancient, apologise

B beautiful, beginning, believe, build, business

C caught, category, certain, chemist, complete, cough, conscious, conscience, character

D describe, disguise, difference, disappear, definitely

E embarrass, enough, especially, example, excitement, exercise, experience

F familiar, famous, finish, forest

G guest, guarantee, guilty, government

H halve, happened, height

I information, interest, immediately, independent, instead

J jewel, juice

K knowledge

L language, listen, league

M maintenance, mountain, machine, measure, meant

N necessary, neither, nuisance

O occasion, ocean, once, opposite, original

P paragraph, parallel, phrase, possible, pressure, purpose

Q quite, quiet, queue

R receipt, receive, region, remember

S sentence, separate, sergeant, sincerely, soldier, succeed

T thousands, therefore, temperature, thorough, tomorrow, theatre

U unfortunately, until, usually

V vacuum, variety, various, vary, vehicle

W weight, written, whose

Have you 'crafted' your writing or have you just written ideas down?

Punctuation:

1. Ellipsis ...

2. Semi Colons; (to draw a link between 2 sentences where the second half relates to the first)

E.g. 'Romeo and Juliet' has a tragic ending; both of the main protagonists die.

3. Colon (introduces lists)

E.g. There are many reasons why we don't want a new supermarket: the town has enough already; traffic would become a problem and so would noise pollution from delivery vehicles.

4. Inverted commas (indicates tone)

The 'bored' teenagers of the town need to find somewhere else to congregate as The Platt is becoming an ASBO eyesore.

5. Brackets (explain point more fully/ show sarcasm/talk directly to the reader)

e.g Teenagers need our support rather than our condemnation (weren't you one many moons ago?)

6. Exclamation marks!

7. Rhetorical Questions (to engage the reader)