



## Supporting your child through their English GCSEs

### Supporting with English revision

Students will be assessed on all of the Literature texts that we have studied throughout GCSE and so knowledge of these texts is paramount. As a starting point we would recommend that students re-read the Literature texts that form their assessment and these are as follows: *Animal Farm*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Frankenstein* and the 'Power and Conflict' poetry cluster. Copies of these texts can be bought on line and the English department can provide revision guides for each text at a cost of £2.75. Students could be asked a question about any character or theme and so a clear knowledge of plot/character and themes is crucial.

The most prepared students are those who are answering lots of practice questions as part of their revision and who are focusing on their areas of weakness as identified in the past practise exam papers they have done during lesson. Students can access practice question material directly from the AQA website and students could also access the online platform Seneca to further aid them in their revision.

To revise for English Language pupils should also access past papers directly from the AQA website but should also read a range of non fiction texts to extend their vocabulary. Students could also practice viewpoint writing by explaining their point of view on current topical issues. We will also be circulating an 'activity of the week' directly to students every Thursday as an additional revision tool.

We thank you for your continued support and wish our Year 11s all the best with their upcoming exams! ☺

### The exams:

You have been doing practise assessments since the start of Year 10 as preparation for your final exams. Preparation for assessments and mock papers is crucial so you gain a realistic picture of the areas you still need to address and work on.

The final exams are on the following dates:

#### Exam title: GCSE English Language AQA 8700

- Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June - morning exam - paper 1 1hr45mins
- Friday 5<sup>th</sup> June - morning exam - paper 2 1hr45mins

#### Exam title: GCSE English Literature AQA 8702

- Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May - afternoon exam - paper 1 1hr45mins
- Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May - morning exam - paper 2 2hr15mins



### Course details:

GCSE English Language

Exam board: AQA

Specification: 8700

Website: <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-language-8700>

GCSE English Literature

Exam board: AQA

Specification: 8702

Website: <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-literature-8702>

### Useful revision websites:

[www.geoffbarton.co.uk](http://www.geoffbarton.co.uk)

[www.sparknotes.com](http://www.sparknotes.com)

[www.cliffsnotes.com](http://www.cliffsnotes.com)

[www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/levels/z98jmp3](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/levels/z98jmp3)



### What do I need to focus on to improve?

Students will have, or will be in the process of, reviewing and reflecting on their November mock exams. Students will also be completing a formal assessment on 'Frankenstein' in their classrooms over the next few weeks and should use their feedback to inform their responses to all of their future Literature responses. Please advise students to speak directly to their English teacher if any clarification is needed.

### Vocabulary I must know...

Students need to be using apt vocabulary in all of their English exams. Below is a range of vocabulary that we would encourage students to learn and use where appropriate and texts it could be applied to.

**Hierarchy:** A system in which members of an organisation are ranked according to relative status or authority. *There is a clear hierarchy amongst the animals in 'Animal Farm' and Blake criticises the hierarchy in 'London'.*

**Patriarchal:** A society ruled by men. *Romeo and Juliet is set in a patriarchal society but Juliet defies her father. We see further examples of patriarchal control in a poem like 'My Last Duchess.'*

**Allegorical:** A story that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, usually a moral or political one. *'Animal Farm' is an allegorical text as Orwell teaches us the catastrophic consequences of a dictatorial society.*

**Tyrannical:** Exercising power in a cruel way. *Napoleon is certainly tyrannical as is the Duke in 'My Last Duchess'. Could we also argue that Lord Capulet demonstrates some tyrannical qualities?*

**Sublime:** Of very great excellence or beauty. This word is often associated with nature. *Victor Frankenstein often describes the sublime when he retreats into nature. We also see it in the Romantic poems we have studied like 'The Prelude.'*

**Patriotic:** Having or expressing devotion to and vigorous support for one's country. *We can use this word to describe the soldier's in 'Charge of the Light Brigade' whilst other poets critique patriotism like in 'Bayonet Charge'.*

**Satirical:** The use of humour, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticise people's stupidity or vices. *'Animal Farm' is certainly satirical and exposes the stupidity of the Russian Revolution.*

**Pathos:** A quality that evokes pity or sadness. *Many of the poets in the 'Power and Conflict' cluster create pathos-think of the sadness we feel for the pilot in 'Kamikaze' for example.*

**Criticise:** Indicate the faults of (someone or something) in a disapproving way. *Nearly all of the texts we study criticise in some way or another, for example Shelley criticises human nature in her text Frankenstein.*

**Subservient:** Less important; subordinate. *The nurse in Romeo and Juliet could be argued as being a subservient character but she takes on a very maternal role.*



## Top Tips for Revising English

### **1) Read!**

Reading any quality material (decent story books, broadsheet newspaper articles or quality magazines) will help boost ALL the skills needed for reading and writing.

### **2) Address spelling mistakes**

Go through your exercise book and make a list of the spellings which have been identified as incorrect. Break the list down into chunks of 10 and then either test yourself on them or get someone to test you at home. Once you've got got a spelling right **CONSISTENTLY**, you could knock it off the list and focus on the ones you're still getting wrong.

### **3) Find your own sources**

Find your own non-fiction sources in broadsheet newspapers or online (look for websites such as news sites, blogs about things such as nature, food, travel, film reviews etc.) and time yourself annotating them for language features. Then write paragraphs to explain how methods have been used.

### **4) Be the teacher**

Choose a topic a week to teach your parents or siblings - if they're doing it right at the end then you must know your stuff!

### **5) Ask for help**

If you are stuck on a text, theme, character or question then ask one of your classmates, use the internet or ask an English teacher for help and advice. It doesn't matter how small the question may seem, ask!

### **6) Reflect on your learning**

As you study, stop every so often to recall what you've learnt. Cover your study aid and, on a separate piece of paper, write down what you can remember. Then check this against your book/revision guide/notes, filling in any gaps with a different colour pen to show what you missed. Repeat this process until you no longer need a different coloured pen.

### **7) Practise doing questions under timed conditions**

Find a past paper or look for tasks in the revision guides and try completing them in silence, with no help, for the amount of time you'd have in the exam. This will help you prepare for what it will be like in the exam and make you realise how fast you need to go.

### **8) Vocabulary Challenge**

Do the 'Vocabulary Challenge' and learn one new word a week and use it in a sentence to make sure you can use it accurately.

Look out for 'Word of the Week' in school to help you do this.

### **9) Look online**

There are lots of resources available online to help you revise.

Go to YouTube and search for Mr Bruff or Mr Salles - you will find revision videos and mini lessons to watch.

### **10) Key references**

If you are studying English Literature then revising the texts thoroughly is vital. Create one-page revision guides on each character, theme or event in the set texts and include quotations as evidence.

Look out for 'Reference of the Week' in school too.

### **And finally...**

Make sure you allow yourself some time to relax; give yourself a night off or reward yourself with a treat when you have completed a set amount of revision. Don't burn out.



## Available Revision Materials

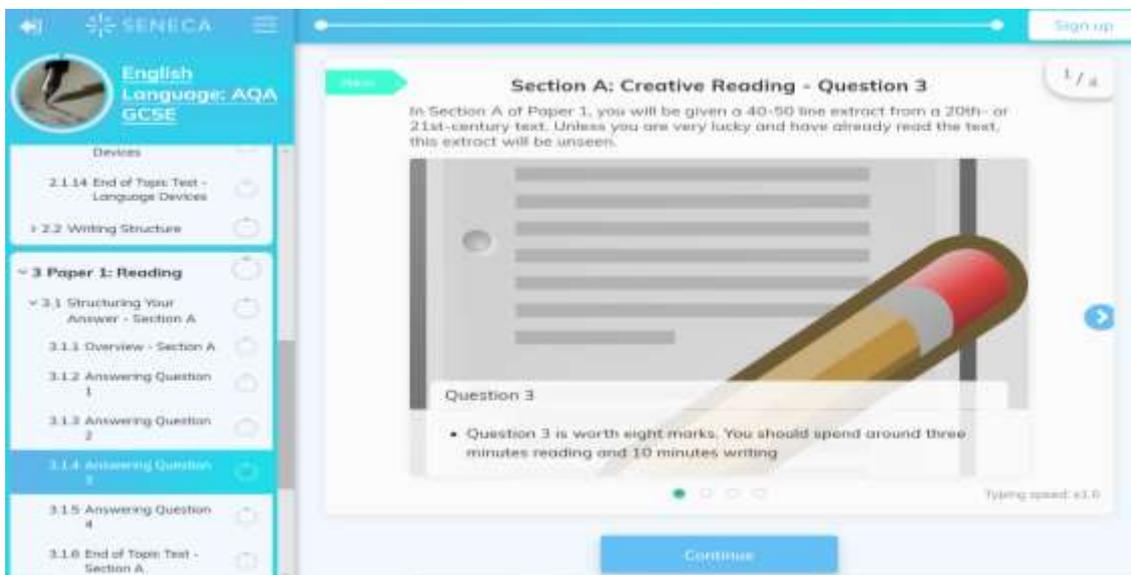
- **Past exam papers**...these can be found on:

English Language: <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-language-8700/assessment-resources?f.Sub-category%7CF=Sample+papers+and+mark+schemes>

English Literature: <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-literature-8702/assessment-resources>

- **SENECA**

SENECA is a online revision and homework platform. It has lots of revision activities for a range of texts and key skills. <https://app.senecalearning.com>



- **CGP Revision Guides**

There are a selection of revision guides which can be purchased from the English Office. Guides are £2.75 each.

