

Let's debunk the myth that you can't revise for English!



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How to succeed in GCSE English Language and Literature...

Year 9 Overview

Start of GCSE taught/
examined content

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3/4	Term 4/5	Term 6
TOPIC	Genres: Dystopian writing	<i>Kick the Moon</i> (novel)	Shakespeare's <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>An Inspector Calls</i> (Literature P2)	Non-fiction: Comparing Writer's Perspectives
BIG QUESTION	Why is Dystopian fiction so engaging for modern readers?	How far does Khan present the treatment of Kelly as cruel?	Who does Shakespeare present as to blame for the death of Romeo and Juliet?	What is Priestley's message about responsibility in <i>An Inspector Calls</i> ?	What do good writers do to convey their perspectives and attitudes in non-fiction texts?
ASSESSMENT	Narrative or descriptive writing	Critical Evaluation	Literature extract-based question	Literature exam-style question	

Reading Homework
Novel linked to unit

Revision Homework
Creating Flash Cards

This extract is taken from the middle of a novel, set in Southern Africa in the 1940s. Mary has recently moved from town to a farm after marrying Dick, a poor farmer.

1 And then, suddenly, the heat became intolerable. Outside in the bush the cicadas
shrilled incessantly, and Mary's head ached; her limbs were heavy and tense. She
would get up and go into the bedroom, to examine her clothes, to see if there was
5 anything she could do: any bit of embroidery, or an alteration. With nothing to do,
she would wander on to the verandah* until at last her head began to swim, and she
6 had to go back to the house to get a glass of water.

7 As time passed, the heat became an obsession. Outside, there was a rough heap of
giant boulders, and she would watch the heat-waves beat up out of the hot stone,
where the heat lizards, vivid red and blue and emerald, darted over the rocks like
10 flames. Inside, she could not bear the sapping, undermining waves that beat down
from the iron roof. Even the usually active dogs used to lie all day on the verandah.
Mary could hear them panting softly, or whining with exasperation because of the
flies. She would lock them out of the house, and in the middle of the morning she
would tell a worker to carry a petrol tin full of lukewarm water into the bedroom, and,
15 having made sure he was out of the house, she stood in a basin on the brick floor,
pouring it over her. The scattering drops fell on the porous brick, which hissed with
17 dryness.

18 'When is it going to rain?' she asked Dick.

'Oh, not for another month yet,' he answered easily, but looking surprised at her
20 question. Surely she knew when the rains were likely to fall? She had been in the
country longer than he had. But it seemed to her that in the town there had been no
seasons, really, not as there were here. She had been out of the rhythm of cold and
heat and rain. It had been hot, it had rained, the cold weather had come – yes,
certainly; but it was something happening independently of her. Here, body and mind
25 were subservient to the slow movement of the seasons; she had never in her life
watched the implacable sky for signs of rain, as she did now, standing on the
verandah, and screwing up her eyes at the great massed white cloud, like blocks of
glittering crystal quartz sailing through the blue.

'The water is going very quickly,' said Dick, one day, frowning.

30 It was fetched twice a week from the bottom of the hill where the well was. Mary
would hear shouting and yelling, as if someone were in agonised pain, and going out
in front of the house, she watched the water-cart come through the trees, drawn by
two slow-moving beautiful oxen, straining their hindquarters up the slope.

35 'What are you using it for?' asked Dick. She told him. His face darkened, and he
looked at her in incredulous horror, as if she had committed a crime.

'What, wasting it like that?'

'I am not wasting it,' she said coldly. 'I am so hot I can't stand it. I want to cool
myself.'

Think: What is the average reading age of a GCSE English Language paper?

15 years, 7 months

What can you do to help improve your child's reading age?

Did you know...?

20 minutes per day (3,600 minutes per school year)

"Research that we have done has shown that if children are reading and understanding on a daily basis for 19 to 24 minutes a day there's substantial growth. If they are reading and understanding for less than three minutes a day, they regress."

James Bell, director of professional services at Renaissance Learning

5 minutes per day (900 minutes per school year)



282,000 words

1 minute per day = 180 minutes per school year.



8,000 words



1,800,000 words

What can you do to help improve your child's reading age?

- ✓ Regular reading – 20 minutes a day.
- ✓ Create a reading household.
- ✓ Read non-fiction and discuss it together e.g. What is the writer's opinion? How can you tell? What words suggest that viewpoint? Summarise this article in one sentence.
- ✓ Develop vocabulary naturally e.g. highlight unfamiliar words in texts, guess the meaning from context, check definition, then use later in the week.

If a parent/carer only does **one thing**, it should be this:
Spend 10 minutes, three times a week, talking to their child about something they have read.

Department Homework: Weekly reading homework of a novel linked to our scheme of learning (40 minutes)

- ✓ Dystopian novel (linked to dystopian unit)
- ✓ Teen issues novel (linked to *Kick the Moon*)
- ✓ Romance/conflict novel (linked to *Romeo and Juliet*)

What you need to do:

- ✓ Check they've got a novel (library, local library, own copy)
- ✓ Check they've read for 40 minutes and sign their bookmark.
- ✓ Check in with what they're reading and discuss it!

English Language

Paper 1 – 1 hour 45 minutes

Section A: Exploring fiction – reading skills

1 fiction extract, 4 questions, 40 marks

Section B: Narrative and/or descriptive writing

40 marks (24 marks content and organisation, 16 marks technical accuracy)

Paper 2 – 1 hour 45 minutes

Section A: Comparing viewpoints - reading skills

2 non-fiction extracts, 4 questions, 40 marks

Section B: Viewpoint writing

40 marks (24 marks content and organisation, 16 marks technical accuracy)

Spoken Language assessment

Complete a speech and answer questions (up to 10 minutes)

Assessed in class in Year 10

English Literature

Paper 1 – 1 hour 45 minutes

Section A: *Macbeth*

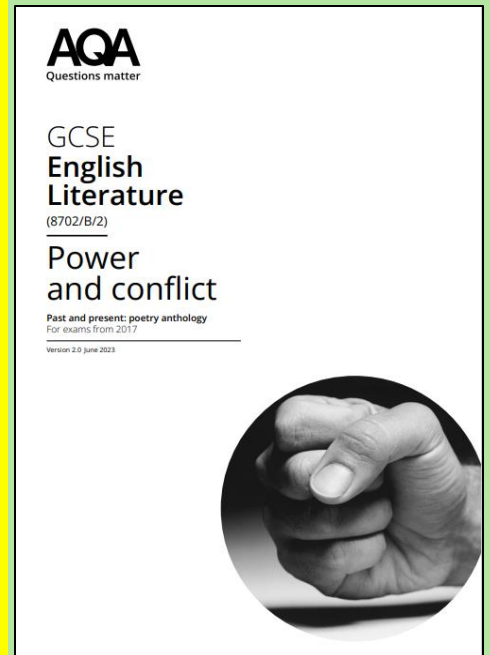
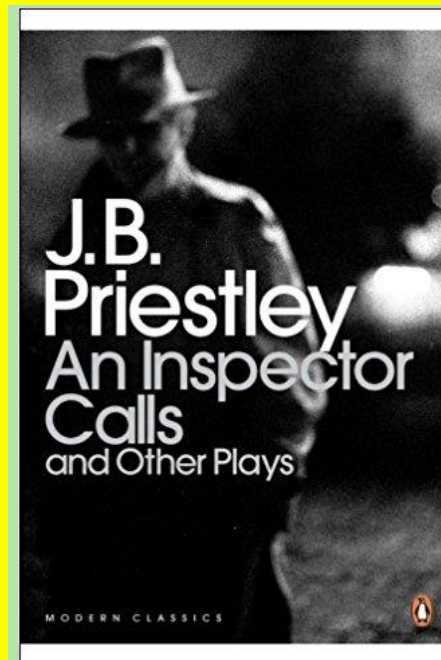
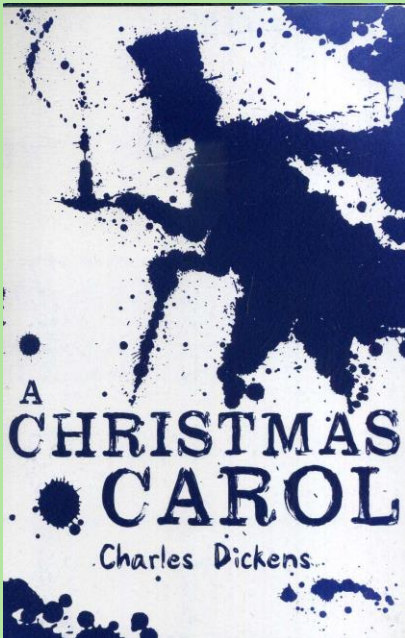
Section B: *A Christmas Carol*

Paper 2 – 2 hours 15 minutes

Section A: *An Inspector Calls*

Section B: Power and Conflict poetry

Section C: Unseen poetry



For English Literature, students need:

- ✓ A good **knowledge of the text** – plot, characters and quotations
- ✓ A good **knowledge of the context** of the text – who wrote it, why they wrote it and how it reflects the time in which it is written and/or set

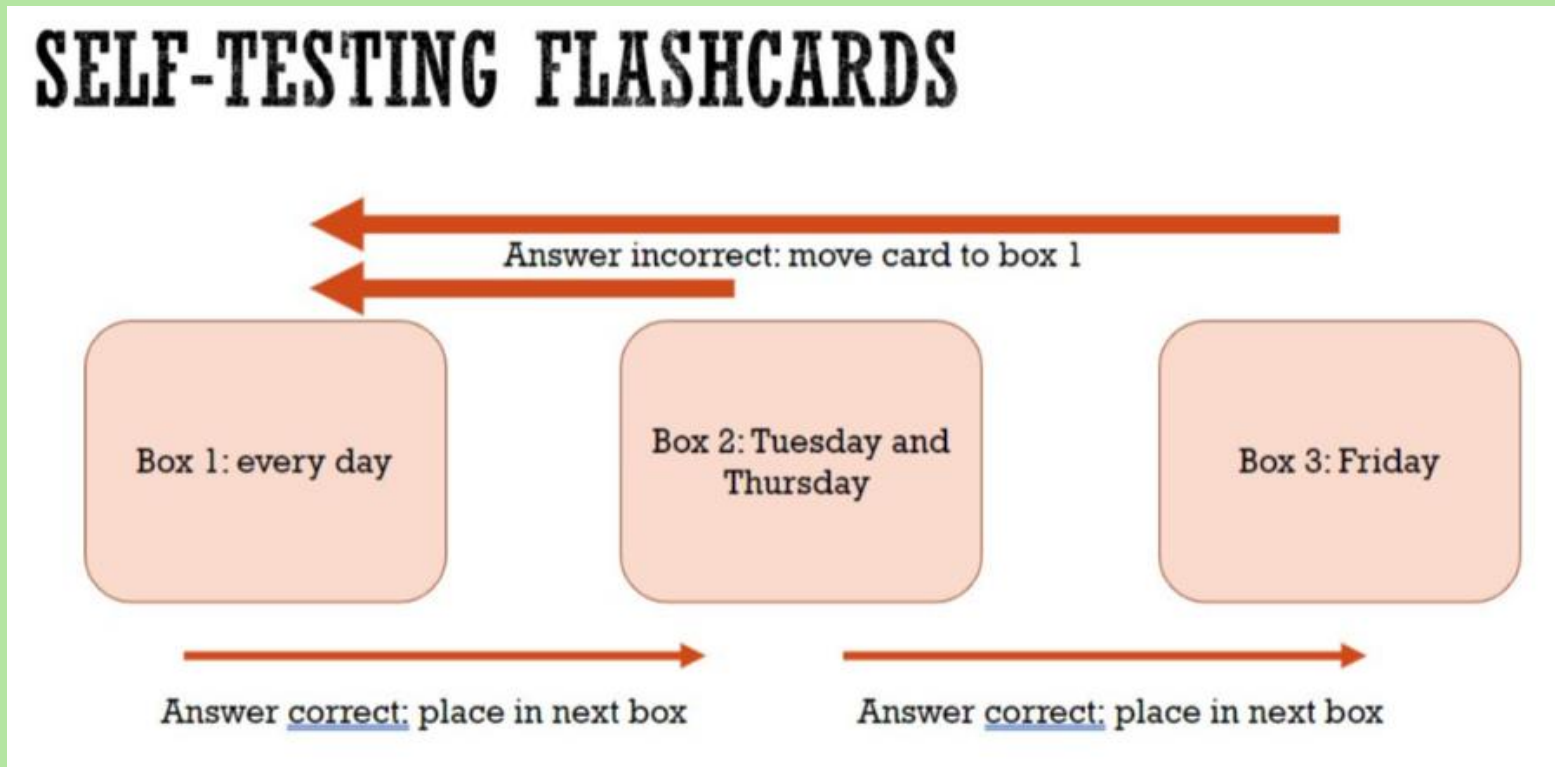
We teach students to be ‘outside’ of the text rather than ‘inside’. This helps to secure a good pass grade and above.

Grade 3 students know their texts, but higher grade students know *how* to analyse the text and *how* to write good essays about them.

The importance of knowing your text:

Department Homework: Weekly flashcard homework – 5 flashcards per week when we start *An Inspector Calls*.

Using these flashcards as part of revision to learn quotations:



Suggested Independent Revision: Knowing your text

- ✓ Re-read the texts! Re-watch a film/TV adaptation!
- ✓ Timeline of key events in the text
- ✓ Character journeys – how do they develop and/or change? Are they ‘static’ or ‘dynamic’?
- ✓ Character and theme grids
- ✓ ‘Everything I know’ in 5 minutes e.g. quotations, characters, context, methods etc.

Example
character and
themes grid:

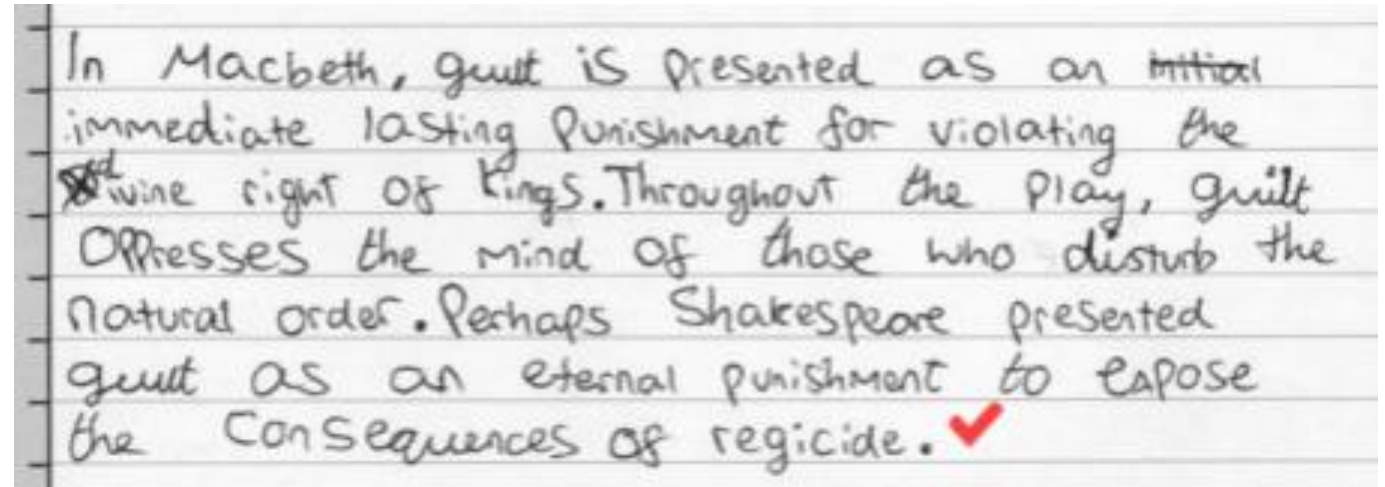
	Responsibility	Class	Power	Family	Gender
Mr Birling					
Mrs Birling					
Gerald					
Eric					
Sheila					
The Inspector					
Eva Smith					

Suggested Independent Revision: Essay writing

- ✓ Quick planning of past questions
- ✓ Writing essays – in timed conditions, or ‘best’ responses untimed
- ✓ Identifying key skills in example essays
- ✓ Make up your own questions and then plan them!

The importance of a thesis statement:

The best students set up an argument in their introduction (and then sum up their ideas in a conclusion).



In Macbeth, guilt is presented as an initial immediate lasting punishment for violating the divine right of kings. Throughout the play, guilt oppresses the mind of those who disturb the natural order. Perhaps Shakespeare presented guilt as an eternal punishment to expose the consequences of regicide. ✓