

GCSE English Literature Exam OVERVIEW and TIPS*

Due to changes in the exam for 2021 the timings and elements may change. However the tips for answering the questions have not changed.

Remember, in these exams you MUST answer on the texts YOU have studied. There will be questions in your exam paper on texts you HAVE NOT studied – DO NOT answer these. This exam is given to students across the country and different schools study different texts. DON'T make any SILLY mistakes!!

PAPER 1 – you have studied: ROMEO AND JULIET & A CHRISTMAS CAROL

PAPER 2 – you have studied: AN INSPECTOR CALLS, POWER AND CONFLICT POETRY. (ALL students do the SAME Unseen Section)

English Literature Paper 1 (Shakespeare and the Literary Heritage) 1hr 45 mins (64 marks)					
Section	Focus	What I need to do...	Number of marks...	Timings	What I need to remember...
A	Romeo and Juliet	Answer ONE question. Cover BOTH bullet points	34 marks (including 4 for SPaG)	50 mins + 5 mins to check SPaG	<p><u>Romeo and Juliet</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will be given a short extract from the play. This extract can come from ANYWHERE in the play. • The question will ask you to focus on a character or a theme / idea. • The question is broken down into TWO bullet points. (You need to cover both bullet points in your answer.) • The first bullet point will ask you to think about the EXTRACT • The second bullet point will ask you to think about the WHOLE PLAY. • The extract is just a STARTING point to help you to think about different ideas. • The BEST thing you can do is to start by showing the examiner that you know WHY the extract is important...WHERE does it appear in the play? WHY is it important? WHAT has happened just before / just after? (This will automatically get you marks for commenting on STRUCTURE). • QUOTE from the extract and ZOOM IN on key WORDS and METHODS used by Shakespeare. • You also need to show a secure understanding of the whole play. • You need to show a clear understanding of Shakespeare's intentions as a writer – think carefully about what Shakespeare wanted to show his audience and what he wanted them to understand. Make connections to a MODERN day audience as well as an ELIZABETHAN audience. • Revise the key THEMES in the play and how these are revealed to the audience. (LOVE (all the different types!) / POWER / VIOLENCE / REVENGE / RELIGION / CONFLICT / MASCULINITY (gender!) / FATE • Revise key quotations from the play (<i>remember this can include stage directions</i>) – pick quotations which will allow you to begin talking about important themes. • You must ANALYSE the different METHODS that Shakespeare uses to convey his ideas. (PROLOGUE / DRAMATIC IRONY / STRUCTURE / DIALOGUE / CHARACTERISATION / SYMBOLISM / IMAGERY / LANGUAGE (WORDS!)) • Keep a sharp focus on the question at all times and link all your points back to the question.

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check your answer for SPaG – characters’ names must have capital letters and must be spelt correctly. Don’t forget to use the apostrophe for possession etc etc.
B	A Christmas Carol	Answer ONE question Cover BOTH bullet points	30 marks	50 mins	<p><u>A Christmas Carol</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will be given a short extract from the novella. This extract can come from ANYWHERE in the novella. • The question will ask you to focus on a character or a theme / idea. • The question is broken down into TWO bullet points. (You need to cover both bullet points in your answer.) • The first bullet point will ask you to think about the EXTRACT • The second bullet point will ask you to think about the WHOLE NOVELLA. • The extract is just a STARTING point to help you to think about different ideas. • The BEST thing you can do is to start by showing the examiner that you know WHY the extract is important...WHERE does it appear in the NOVELLA. WHY is it important? WHAT has happened just before / just after? (This will automatically get you marks for commenting on STRUCTURE). • QUOTE from the extract and ZOOM IN on key WORDS and METHODS used by Dickens. • You also need to show a secure understanding of the whole novella. • You need to show a clear understanding of Dickens’ intentions as a writer – think carefully about what Dickens wanted to show his readers and what he wanted them to understand. Make connections to a MODERN day reader as well as a VICTORIAN audience. • Revise the key THEMES in the novella and how these are revealed to the audience. (CHRISTMAS / POVERTY / FAMILY / POWER and INEQUALITY / RELIGION (REDEMPTION) / CHANGE • Revise key quotations from the novella – pick quotations which will allow you to begin talking about important themes. • You must ANALYSE the different METHODS that Dickens uses to convey his ideas. (TITLE / STRUCTURE / ALLEGORY / DIALOGUE / CHARACTERISATION (archetypes) / SYMBOLISM / IMAGERY / LANGUAGE (WORDS!) • Keep a sharp focus on the question at all times and link all your points back to the question. <p>SPaG is still important as your examiner can’t award top marks if you make silly mistakes – characters’ names must have capital letters and must be spelt correctly. Don’t forget to use the apostrophe for possession etc etc.</p>

English Literature Paper 2 (Modern Texts and Poetry) 2hrs 15 mins (96 marks)

Section	Focus	What I need to do...	Number of marks...	Timings	What I need to remember...
A	An Inspector Calls	Answer ONE question from a choice of 2.	34 marks <i>(including 4 for SPaG)</i>	45 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will be given a choice of two questions. • You need to pick ONE question (totally your choice, pick whichever one you feel you will answer the best). • You need to show a secure understanding of the whole play. • You need to show a clear understanding of Priestley's intentions as a writer – think carefully about what Priestley wanted to show his audience and what he wanted them to understand. • Revise the key THEMES in the play and how these are revealed to the audience. (CONFLICT / POWER / INEQUALITY / AGE / GENDER / CLASS / SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY / NEED FOR CHANGE / APPEARANCE vs REALITY) • Revise key quotations from the play (<i>remember this can include stage directions</i>) – pick quotations which will allow you to begin talking about important themes. • You must ANALYSE the different METHODS that Priestley uses to convey his ideas. (TITLE / STRUCTURE / CHARACTERISATION / DRAMATIC IRONY / DIALOGUE / • Keep a sharp focus on the question at all times and link all your points back to the question. • Check your answer for SPaG – characters' names must have capital letters and must be spelt correctly. Don't forget to use the apostrophe for possession etc etc.
B	Power and Conflict Poetry	Answer only ONE question	30 marks	45 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will have ONE of the 15 poems printed in the exam. You will not know which poem this is. • You will have ONE question to answer – this is a COMPARISON question. • You will need to select ONE other poem from the Power and Conflict cluster to compare with the poem printed in the exam. • You should think carefully about the question and make sure you are choosing an appropriate poem to make your comparisons. • You should learn KEY QUOTATIONS (3 at most) from ALL 15 poems. • You will need to make links between the two poems (similarities AND differences) and use comparative connectives to analyse (Similarly/ On the other hand etc). • You must ANALYSE the different METHODS that the poets use to convey their ideas. • Keep a sharp focus on the question at all times and link all your points back to the question.
C (part 1)	Unseen Poetry	Answer one question	24 marks	30 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will be given a poem that you have never seen before. • You will answer ONE question. • Read the question carefully and then look for relevant ideas in the poem. • You must ANALYSE the different METHODS that the poet uses to convey their ideas.

		on one poem			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep a sharp focus on the question at all times and link all your points back to the question. • There is no right or wrong answer so PLEASE have confidence in your ideas. If you can prove your point with a quote and analysis, then you will be rewarded.
C (part 2)	Unseen Poetry (comparison)	Answer one question on two poems	8 marks	10 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will be given ANOTHER poem that you have never seen before. • You will need to COMPARE this poem with the one you have just analysed. • You must focus on the poets' METHODS ONLY. • Look at TITLES first and say something about these. • Next, look at FIRST LINES / openings AND COMPARE them. • Then, look for a METHODS and compare them. • Finally, look at ENDINGS and compare them. <p>(e.g. Both poets begin with a simile. In poem A this conveys..... whereas in poem B this conveys..... OR In poem A the poet begins with an optimistic tone using the word 'glistening' and the phrase 'ray of light' whereas in poem B the poet begins with a sorrowful tone using words like 'death', 'regret' and 'grief'.)</p>

Remember:

- ***'An Inspector Calls' and 'Romeo and Juliet' are PLAYS not novels. You need to refer to the AUDIENCE not the reader.***
- ***Revise your verbs for effect... This conveys / implies / suggests / emphasises / exaggerates / juxtaposes etc***
- ***Revise key vocabulary for each text – this will help you to express your ideas more clearly and with more sophistication.***