

REVISION GUIDE FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE GCSE

English Language consists of two papers, both presenting unseen material. It will be in exactly the format of the exam papers at the end of year 10.

Paper 1 (1hr45 minutes) – Creative and Fictional Writing.

An extract from a novel or short story written since 1900 will be given to read for **about 15 minutes**. Students then have **45 minutes** to answer comprehension questions, which will be in this format:

Q1: will be a 4-mark Information question on a section of the passage.

Q2: will be an 8-mark question on specifics of Language in a section of the passage. Students will be expected to comment in detail on the language used in that section, and the impact this has on the reader, using some technical language to explain their answer.

Q3: will be an 8-mark question on the effects of the way the author has structured the writing, normally of the whole piece, but sometimes of a section. They will be asked to comment on the effect that structuring of the piece has, again using technical language to explain their answer.

Q4: will be a 20-mark question phrased in the form of: *A student, reading this piece, commented: "...." To what extent do you agree with this?*

This will be a mini-essay (three or so paragraphs), where students will be expected to comment on the passage (or a section of the passage), analysing language and structure as to how the author has achieved her-his effects.

Students will then have **45 minutes** to complete a piece of **Creative writing**:

Q5: will be a choice of two questions, asking students to write either a story, the start of a story, or a piece of descriptive writing, that will be loosely based on the text that they were answering on in qq1-4.

They may get a picture prompt, or may have an instruction such as "Write about a time when..." or "Describe the view from..." or a title such as "The Day Out" or "The Arrival".

If they are using the picture prompt, they do NOT have to describe the picture, but should use it as the starting point for their writing.

Q5 will be marked out of 24 for content and organisation (including vocabulary and paragraphing), and out of 16 for spelling, punctuation, grammar and other literacy skills.

Total marks for each section: **40**. Total marks for whole paper: **80**.

The most common mistakes here are misuse of timing (the timing on the reading half is very tight), and misreading on which sections of the text each question is based.

Paper 2 (1hr45 minutes) – Non-Fiction and Transactional Writing.

Two extracts, one of them written before 1900, will be given to read for **about 15 minutes**. These will be non-fiction pieces, such as diary extracts, letters, articles, bits of advertising etc, on a common theme. Two questions (q2 & q4) are directly comparative, and answers which do not directly compare will lose most of the marks. Students need to be aware which passage the question is referring to.

Students then have **45 minutes** to answer comprehension questions, which will be in this format:

Q1: will be a 4-mark Information question on a section of one of the passages.

Q2: will be an 8-mark compare and summarise question on both texts, in the form of: *Use details from **both** Sources to write a summary of the differences between the way Is presented in both texts.*

Q3: will be an 12-mark question on the language of a section of one of the passages (normally but not always the different one from q1), in the format of: *How does the writer use language to describe the...?*

Students will be expected to use technical language to explain the effects the writer creates.

Q4: will be a 16-mark comparative question on the different ideas and perspectives in the two pieces, phrased in the form of: *Compare how the writers convey their different ideas and perspectives of the events that they describe.*

This will be a mini-essay (three or so paragraphs), where students will be expected to compare the passages (sometimes a section of each passage), analysing language and structure as to how the author has achieved her-his effects.

Students will then have **45 minutes** to complete a piece of **Transactional writing**:

Q5: will start with a quote, loosely based on the texts that they were answering on in qq1-4. They will then have to write a speech, or an essay, or a letter, or a radio talk, etc to argue for or against that statement. They need to be aware of their audience, so that they are pitching their argument correctly, showing awareness of *Text-Type, Genre, Audience, Purpose*, and how these influence their writing *Style*.

Q5 will be marked out of 24 for content and organisation (including vocabulary and paragraphing), and out of 16 for spelling, punctuation, grammar and other literacy skills.

Total marks for each section: **40**. Total marks for whole paper: **80**.

The most common mistakes here are misuse of timing (the timing on the reading half is very tight), and misreading on which sections of which text each question is based.

ENGLISH LITERATURE GCSE REVISION – AQA – what the exams will look like

English Literature consists of two papers, total of four hours.

Paper 1 is Shakespeare and the Nineteenth Century Novel (1hr 45mins)

Macbeth and *The Sign of Four* – the maximum number of marks for this is 64.

Section A is Shakespeare, of which students should answer **q1 only**, as that's the only question on *Macbeth*.

The *Macbeth* question (**q1**) consists of an extract from the play of about 15-20 lines, possibly a speech or a section of dialogue, almost certainly containing one of the lead characters. The question will be in the form of:

Starting with this section, explain how far you think Shakespeare presents...(character or relationship).. as

Students will need

(a) to analyse the language of the extract in detail and how it helps to answer the question, using any technical language as appropriate,

(b) to write about the theme/character/relationship elsewhere in the play (it is perfectly all right to disagree with the premise of the statement, but they will need to explain why other people might disagree with them),

(c) to bring in contextual details.

There are 30 marks for this, + 4 marks for quality of written communication.

Students are advised to spend about **55 minutes** on this question.

Section B is The Nineteenth Century Novel, of which students should answer **q13 only**, as that's the only question on *The Sign of Four*.

The *Sign of Four* question (**q13**) consists of an extract from the novel of about 20-25 lines. The question will be in the form of a statement based on the extract, such as "*Conan Doyle was known as a master of suspense*", and a question in the form of:

Starting with this extract, how far do you agree with this statement?

Students will need

(a) to analyse the language of the extract in detail, and how it helps to answer the question, using technical language as appropriate,

(b) to write about the theme/character elsewhere in the play (again the question is encouraging students to agree or disagree or a bit of both),

(c) to bring in contextual details.

There are 30 marks for this.

Students are advised to spend about **50 minutes** on this question.

Paper 2 is Modern Texts and Poetry (2hr 15mins)

le: *Lord of the Flies*, *Power and Conflict Poems* from the *AQA Anthology* and unseen poetry - the maximum number of marks for this is 96.

Section A is Modern Texts, of which students should answer either **q13 or q14**, as those are the only questions on *Lord of the Flies*.

These questions will either be on a thematic issue (the island, the conch, fire, Britain etc) or on a lead character.

Students will need

(a) to bring in quotes and-or detailed moments from the novel to back up their points, and to use technical language where appropriate,

(b) to write about the theme/character throughout the novel,

(c) to bring in contextual details.

There are 30 marks for this, + 4 marks for quality of written communication.

Students are advised to spend about **45 minutes** on this question.

Section B is Prepared Poetry, of which students should answer **q26 only**, as that's the only question on *Power and Conflict*.

The paper will print one of the poems from the Anthology, and students will be asked to compare that poem to another poem of their choice from the Anthology, in the light of some theme that they give you (nature, power, violence, memory etc).

Students will need

(a) to analyse the language of the presented poem in detail, using technical language where appropriate,

(b) to compare in every paragraph how the theme is used similarly or differently in the other poem,

(c) to bring in contextual details of one or both poems.

There are 30 marks for this.

Students are advised to spend about **45 minutes** on this question

Section C is Unseen Poetry, of which students should answer **q27.1 and q27.2**.

q27.1 will print a poem students will not have seen before, and students will be asked a question in the form of:

In ...(poem)..., how does the poet present ideas about....?

Students will need to analyse the language and themes of the presented poem in detail, using technical language where appropriate, and maybe explain its structure where this is relevant.

There are 24 marks for this question.

Students are advised to spend about **32 minutes** on this question.

q27.2 will print a further poem that connects to the poem in q27.1 in some way. They will be asked a comparative question about the ways in which the poets present their attitudes to something in the poems.

There are 8 marks for this question.

Students are advised to spend about **13 minutes** on this question.