



St. Wilfrid's Catholic School

A Parents' Guide to the GCSE English Language and English Literature Exams

"He liked the mere act of reading, the magic of turning scratches on a page into words inside his head."

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Why is English important?

If you have a child who just cannot seem to see the significance of English, remind them of the following:

- A good English GCSE is required for most level 3 courses.
- Most universities and employers will demand GCSE English, often at Grade 5 and above.
- It is *much* easier to do now rather than retaking it next year or doing it later in life.
- English teaches you vital life skills that give you confidence and an ability to communicate.

Getting the basics right

Developing a short-term routine is key to reducing stress in the long term! Do any of the following apply to you or your child?

- ✓ Develop a regular routine for completing homework. Make sure there is a place free from distractions to work in, preferably with a desk/table to write on.
- ✓ Ensure your child has all the resources they need. For Literature: they have all been given their own copies of the modern texts, poetry anthologies, Shakespeare texts and 19th century texts.
- ✓ Ensure your child is attending any intervention or revision sessions being offered.
- ✓ The lessons are of the utmost importance – if these are not being valued or used to their full potential, they will be missing vital information.
- ✓ If they have been absent for any reason, check that they have spoken to the teacher to find out what they missed and how to catch up.
- ✓ Never say “I was never any good at English” as this can lead them to believe they may never be any good and to give up trying. Use positive reinforcement to encourage your child to do their best.
- ✓ Be aware of your child’s areas for development with SPaG (Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar). Test them on the spellings they keep getting wrong. More help on common SPaG errors can be found below on pages 9- 12.

Talking and Working Together

How to give practical help when your child is revising:

- Talk to your child about the texts they are studying. Even better, read them yourselves – all children have their own copy of each of the exam texts. Ask them why a certain character is important, or their function in the play or book.
- Talk to them about current affairs. Discuss the news on TV. Encourage them to express their opinions and to explain them clearly.
- Talk about the meanings of unfamiliar words you come across in books, films and TV programmes.
- Do an exam paper yourself! It will give you a good idea of just what your child is facing. Get your child to mark it and to teach you how to do it better.

Exam Details!

Our exam board is AQA for both English language and English literature.

GCSE English Language

Component 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing

Date tbc 1 hour and 45 minutes (50% of total grade)

Section A: Reading comprehension of one literature text 40 marks

Section B: One writing task: descriptive or narrative 40 marks (24 content, 16 SPaG)

Component 2: Writers' viewpoints and perspectives

Date tbc 1 hours and 45 mins (50 % of total grade)

Section A: Reading comprehension and comparison of two literary non-fiction texts.

40 marks

Section B: One writing task: present a viewpoint in whatever form you are asked (essay, letter, article, leaflet, speech) 40 marks (24 content, 16 SPaG)

Component 3: Non-examination (Not weighted)

One presentation / speech, including responses to questions and feedback.

GCSE English Literature

Component 1: Shakespeare and Nineteenth century Novel

Date tbc 1 hour and 45 minutes (40% of total grade)

Section A: Shakespeare play: Answer one question on the play you have studied. They will be required to write in detail about an extract from the play and then to write about the play as a whole

34 marks

Section B: The nineteenth century novel: 'A Christmas Carol' One question which again starts with an extract and asks students to also write about the entire text.

30 marks

Component 2: Modern Texts and Poetry

Date tbc 2 hours and 15 mins (60 % of total grade)

Section A: Modern novel/drama text: students will answer one essay question from a choice of two 34 marks

Section B: The Poetry Anthology: students will answer one comparative question on one named poem printed on the paper and one other poem from their chosen anthology cluster. 30 marks

Section C: Unseen Poetry: two questions. Students will answer one question on one unseen poem and one question comparing this poem with a second unseen poem.

32 marks

How to revise

Some people say: “You can’t revise for English”. These people are wrong! Here are lots of practical ideas:

- **Get organised!** You have lots of information in your exercise book. Find it. Sort it. And use it. Remember to bring your exercise book to every English lesson, along with the book you are studying.
- **Read the books!** If you already have, that’s great. Read them again! Remember that much of the exams focus on testing your reading. You are expected to have read the texts a number of times, especially any key passages.
- **Know what is going on.** Be clear on what you are being assessed for each part of the course. Know your Assessment Objectives.
- **Make notes.** Produce mind maps/summaries of different parts of the text / themes / characters you are studying.
- **Do some practice questions!** Time yourself and answer questions from past exam papers.
- **Learn lots of short quotations.** Don’t forget you can’t take your books into the exam. Get some cue cards - write 5 key quotations for each theme and each character on them and learn them! On the bus, in the car, just before bed...you get the idea. Stick them in your bag and take them with you, everywhere you go!
- **Plan some literature essays.** Time yourself. Spend 5 minutes writing down and then organising your ideas for different questions.
- **Read some poems.** Think about your response to them and what you might write about them.
- **Read lots of examples of text types you might get in the writing exam.** Pick up leaflets, newspapers, magazines and letters. Look at how they are set out and think about how you can use the ideas in your own writing. Read the Sunday papers. Read about things you’re interested in (music, films, sport, fashion etc.) on The Telegraph, Independent and The Guardian newspaper websites. They’re free!
- **Get into a routine.** It helps to have a timetable and stick to it. Leave the TV and Xbox/PS4 as a reward. Maybe don’t revise in the same room as that games console!

Find revision resources and examples of revision tools below

Recommended websites – revision help for you at the click of a button:

<https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/examspecs/zcbchv4> - BBC bitesize English Language

<https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/examspecs/zxqncwx> - BBC bitesize English Literature

<https://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/> - No Fear Shakespeare – translates whole Shakespeare texts

<https://www.shmoop.com/literature/> - Provides: summaries, quotations, analyses, questions, and quizzes - great for Shakespeare (google Shmoop and title of play to find resources quickly – you can do the same with other texts though not all may be available. A quick google search will help!)

<https://www.teachwire.net/news/5-of-the-best-last-minute-gcse-english-language-revision-resources> - this website will point you in the direction of lots of free, useful revision resources and tools

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-language-8700/assessment-resources> - the AQA website contains advice and past papers (English language)

https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-literature-8702/assessment-resources?start_rank=1 - the AQA website contains advice and past papers (English literature)

Useful revision guides/books:

- The CGP guides are particularly useful for English. You can see an example of one for 'A Christmas Carol' below. These guides exist for all the literature texts and there are also guides to help with the English language papers.

Young Adult › Education & Reference › Study Aids



Grade 9-1 GCSE English Text Guide - A Christmas Carol (CGP GCSE English 9-1 Revision) Paperback – 8 May 2015

by CGP Books (Author, Editor)

★★★★★ 177 customer reviews

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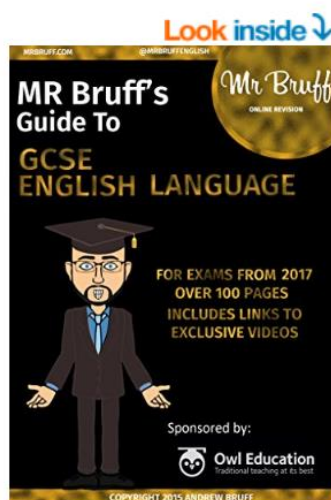
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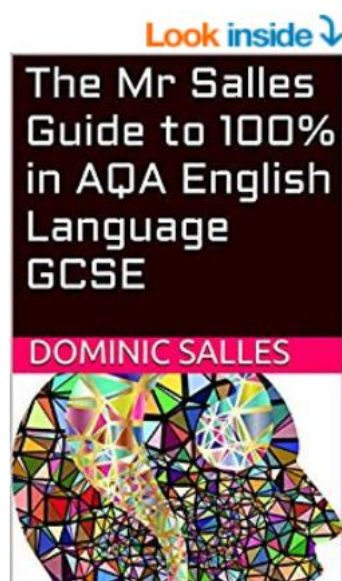
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SPaG – spelling, punctuation and grammar

If your child struggles with spelling, punctuation and grammar, there are many exercises online they can complete in order to practise and improve certain skills. Below is a lesson that students can use to test their knowledge. This lesson focuses on how your knowledge compares to the expectations placed on students at KS2:

STARTER – Identify the SPaG

1. Identify two nouns

2. Identify two adjectives

3. Identify two verbs

4. Identify a comma

On one side of the river, the golden foothill slopes curve up to the strong and rocky Gabilan Mountains, but on the valley side the water is lined with trees- willows fresh and green with every spring, carrying in their lower leaf junctures the debris of the winter's flooding; and sycamores with mottled, white, recumbent limbs and branches that arch over the pool.

10. Identify a prepositional phrase

5. Identify a possessive apostrophe

9. Identify a subordinate clause

6. Where is the semi-colon and why is there a semi-colon?

8. Identify a conjunction

7. Where is the dash and why is it used?

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KS2 SATS Structure of the test

The key stage 2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test comprises:

- Paper 1: questions (50 marks)
- Paper 2: spelling (20 marks)

Which subjects at KS4 currently mark for SPaG?

According to AQA:

Spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) is assessed separately in externally assessed units in GCSE:

- ✓ English Language
- ✓ English Literature
- ✓ Geography
- ✓ History
- ✓ Religious Studies

This applies to all students taking these exams including those with special educational needs, dyslexia and disabilities such as a visual or hearing impairment.

Please use this link for the SATs test referred to on the next slide:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-2-tests-2018-english-grammar-punctuation-and-spelling-test-materials>

How does your SPaG knowledge compare to the expectations for year 6?

In pairs or small groups: attempt to complete (as much as you can!) of the SPaG paper.

10 minutes:

We will go through answers at the end.

How did you do?

Can you work out what the SPaG error is and correct it?



Work in pairs! You have 5 minutes

1. I used to clime the school library roof.
2. I could of been dead or badly injured.
3. That accident made me feel so scared I hated it I worried I might die.
4. Even when I was a child I was adventures.
5. I recently wanted to SAS reserved but I failed.
6. i want to take on bigger challenges so that i can overcome my fears.
7. I always been adventurous even, when I was a little kid.
8. I wanted to do it I thought it was a good idea to do it I did.

SPELLING TEST: 15 commonly misspelled words

TIP:

Check your register – do any of your students have extra difficulty with spelling?

1. Across
2. Politician
3. Beginning
4. Beautiful
5. Unnecessary

6. Definitely
7. Separate
8. Truly
9. Occurred
10. knowledge

11. Government
12. Independent
13. Friend
14. Environment
15. Embarrass

Quick quiz – out of ten!

<https://www.sats2019.uk/sats-quiz-english/>

Google: SATs 2019 quick quiz