

Information about  
GCSE English &  
English Literature

Mrs Victor

# The course students have been following:

- o WJEC Specification: English and English Literature.
- o Full details on the specification and the marking criteria: [www.wjec.co.uk](http://www.wjec.co.uk)

# How Are The Students Assessed?

All the GCSE courses are assessed both through final examinations and 'Controlled Assessment'.

- o 'Controlled Assessment' is what we previously knew as 'coursework'.
- o Students complete these assessments in yrs 10 & 11. They must be completed under 'exam' conditions in lessons. They can revise preparatory notes at home.

# GCSE English Language: Controlled Assessment

Controlled Assessment = **20%** of the total Language marks

- o **Speaking and Listening (20%):** 3 tasks assessed in lessons by class teacher.
- o Controlled assessments -

## More information about the GCSE:

UNIT 1 30% External Assessment Exam – May/June **yr11**  
(1 hour 45 mins, including an advised 15 mins reading)

60 Raw Marks

Section A 15%

Reading of unseen prose by a major writer

(Fiction reading task with questions to test understanding  
(comprehension))

Section B 15%

One imaginative writing task

(A narrative or descriptive task. Marks awarded for content and  
accuracy.)

**UNIT 2 30% External Assessment (Exam May / June yr 11)**

**(1 hour 45 mins, including an advised 15 mins reading)**

**60 Raw Marks**

**Section A 15%**

**Reading of instructional / explanatory / persuasive / media texts**

**(Non-fiction comprehension e.g. two linked articles and questions)**

**Section B 15%**

**One explanatory / persuasive writing task**

**(Typical writing questions: speech, letter, report, article)**

## UNIT 3 20% Controlled Assessment 40 Raw Marks

(Completed in lessons yr 10 and 11)

### Reading and Writing

- Reading: Instructional, explanatory, persuasive (10%)
- Writing: Writing from a list of tasks specified by WJEC (10%)

### Reading task - Analysis of a non-fiction media text

e.g. Tanorexics – Big Issue article outlining the dangers of using sunbeds

Analysis of a charity advertisement e.g. RSPCA

### Writing Tasks

A transactional piece eg. Speech arguing that the legal age for driving should be raised to 18

Creative writing e.g. The Visitor

## UNIT 4 20% Controlled Assessment 40 Raw Marks

### Speaking and Listening

Two tasks, including real life uses and audiences. Assessment to focus on:

- 1 • presentation or talk, answering questions, in either a formal or informal situation (10%)
- 2 • group discussion that has a local community/workplace focus or topic where candidates have a role and sustain a point of view (10%)

1 e.g. Talk about a hobby or issue (such as immigration, vivisection, teenage pregnancy)

2 e.g. Take on the role of a parent / council member / local shopkeeper / environmentalist, etc. Argue for or against the plans to build a new supermarket in your town.



# GCSE English Literature: Controlled Assessment

Controlled Assessment = **25%** of the total Literature marks

4 hrs to write the essay after preparation in lessons

- o Written essay response that compares a Shakespeare play with a selection of poems. Pupils study the play and the poems in class.
- o e.g An essay on love / relationships in Romeo and Juliet and 2 or 3 'love' poems
- o Or, an essay on conflict in Macbeth and 2 / 3 poems on the same theme

**CONTROLLED ASSESSMENT (LINKED TEXTS) 25%**

**Unit 3: Poetry and drama (literary heritage) (40 Raw Marks; 50 UMS)**

**English/Irish/Welsh literary heritage: Poetry [taken from WJEC GCSE poetry collection] and play by**

**Shakespeare – chosen by the centre (but not *Othello* or *Much Ado About Nothing*).**



LITERATURE EXAM 1 EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT 35% (2 hrs)

*Exam January Yr 10*

(Of Mice and Men & Unseen Poetry)

Unit 1: Prose (different cultures) and poetry (contemporary) (50 Raw Marks)

Section A 21% (INDIVIDUAL TEXTS IN CONTEXT)

Different Cultures Prose: *Of Mice and Men* (Steinbeck)

**Q1** A question on a short extract from *Of Mice and Men* 10 marks

*Typical questions*

*What impression do you get of ..... In this extract?*

*How does the author create atmosphere in this extract?*

*(The extract will be printed on the exam paper)*

**Q2** Essay on *Of Mice Men* (20 marks)

*This tests knowledge and understanding of the whole text. Pupils should be able to refer to key characters, themes and events in their response. Close reference to the text is important.*

*A choice of 2 essay questions – Just answer one.*

*e.g. How important is Crooks in *Of Mice and Men*?*

*For which character do you feel most sympathy?*

*Imagine you are George. Write down your thoughts and feelings at the end of the book.*

Section B 14% (COMPARATIVE STUDY)

Contemporary: **Unseen poetry comparison**

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT 40% (2 hrs)

Pupils will read and respond to two poems.

**Write about the poems and their effect on you.**

Literature exam 2

May / June yr 11

INDIVIDUAL TEXTS IN CONTEXT

Unit 2b: Contemporary drama and literary heritage prose (\*68 Raw Marks; 80 UMS)

INDIVIDUAL TEXTS IN CONTEXT

Contemporary Drama: *The History Boys* (Bennett); OR *Blood Brothers* (Russell); OR *A View from the Bridge* (Miller); (20%) **DRAMA**

English/Irish/Welsh Literary Heritage Prose: *A Christmas Carol* (Dickens); OR *Lord of the Flies* (Golding); OR *Ash on a Young Man's Sleeve* (Abse) (20%) **PROSE**

*Extract from play*

*Essay on play*

*Extract from prose text*

*Essay from prose text*

\* *Class teacher will select appropriate texts for each class*

# *Additional Details*

- o **Specific texts and questions:** Information on which texts are being studied can be obtained from class teachers.
  
- o **Incomplete Controlled Assessment:**
  - Lunch time catch up sessions
  - Letters home
  
- o **Marking Controlled Assessment:**
  - Moderated by English department
  - WJEC moderation

# Section A: Reading (20%)

## Understand Non-fiction Texts

A variety of questions on a number of unseen non-fiction texts (e.g. newspaper articles, advertisements and/or internet documents)

At Higher Tier – 4 questions on 3 texts

Students are asked to:

- o identify **key arguments**
- o explain why various **facts and opinions** are used
- o comment on the **context** of the piece (i.e. author and target audience)
- o analyse **language features** (such as formal/informal language, persuasive devices, and emotive language).
- o **presentational devices** (layout, font, sub-headings, text organisation, and images/symbolism).

Getting  
an A/A\*

## Section A: Reading (20%)

### Understand Non-fiction Texts

The skills targeted in this part of the paper are students ability to:

- o Read and **understand** texts, **selecting** material appropriate to purpose, **collating** from different sources and **making comparisons** and cross-references as appropriate.
- o **Explain** and **evaluate how** writers use linguistic, grammatical, structural and presentational features to achieve effects and engage and influence the reader.

Getting an  
A/A\*

Getting an  
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## Section A: Reading (20%) Understand Non-fiction Texts

- o Where a question is seeking retrieval, Students are expected to locate the necessary detail and do not have to make an interpretation.
- o Where students are required to infer, they will need to **go beyond retrieval** and will need to **interpret how** details tell us more.
- o Where questions ask specifically about language or presentation features, students will have to select details that support the writer's intention and be able to **explain their effect**.
- o Comparison questions will expect students to **consider** what is the same or different about the writers' intentions and to **select evidence** that supports their interpretation.



Getting an  
A/A\*

## Section A: Reading (20%) Understand Non-fiction Texts

- o At **C** grade, students will show that they understand a text and can sometimes comment on language choices and how these meet the writer's intention.
- o An **A/A\*** response will be an informed, critical response to the text and the language devices used to appeal to a particular readership. They will **offer their own interpretation** of the writer's ideas, selecting supporting detail imaginatively.

Getting an  
A/A\*

## Section A: Reading (20%) Understand Non-fiction Texts

- o At **B** and **C**, indicators of achievement is explanation that leads to exploration.
- o At **A** and **A\***, examiners are looking for perceptive, sustained and sophisticated analysis; **a real ownership and control of the analysis.**

## Section A: Ways to Revise

- o **Read a range of newspapers at home:** identify PAT, (Purpose, Audience, Tone) highlight the techniques, facts, opinions, layout and presentation used etc. [www.bbc.co.uk/news](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news)
- o Look at the **number of marks** and plan out response which takes approximately 2 minutes per mark.
- o **Use mnemonics** to remember techniques: AFOREST (alliteration, fact, opinion, rhetorical question, emotive language, statistic, triplet/rule of three etc.)
- o **Practise** writing paragraphs on authors' use of language; presentational devices; fact and opinion...
- o **Past papers** (available in school, on SRC and from WJEC website)

# English Language: Reading

## Demonstrate reading skills

We become better readers simply by reading more... both fiction (teachers and school library are happy to recommend) and non-fiction (e.g. newspapers, magazines, leaflets, cornflake packets)

- **Struggling** readers find it difficult to decode texts.
- **Competent** readers understand texts they can identify the “**what**” of reading).
- **High-level** readers can respond to implied meanings and hints; distinguish between fact and opinion; follow and comment upon an argument; and comment on writers’ style and use of language (this is the “**how**” of reading)

# *Tips for Students - Reading*

- o Read the questions carefully and ignore any irrelevant information.
- o Look at the number of marks designated to the question and divide your time accordingly.
- o Use the exam texts: highlight, underline, circle...
- o Use the language of the exam question.
- o Read the texts more than once.

# Writing

Students are assessed on:

- o Writing ability: spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- o Ability to write to suit purpose and audience
- o Paragraphing
- o Range of vocabulary

# Writing

## Q 1) Writing to inform, explain or describe

Students are being assessed on: effective use of paragraphs, use of interesting and appropriate vocabulary, matching style and tone to the reader (specified in the question), accuracy of spelling and punctuation.

Ways to revise:

- o write a description of a variety of people, places and things using all 5 senses
- o use a thesaurus to develop vocabulary
- o practise spellings: look, cover, write, check
- o practise writing for different forms: newspaper articles, letters, speeches
- o look at past answers from lesson and redraft and improve them

# Writing

## Q2) Writing to argue or persuade

- o Students need to be clear of the differences between persuade and argue.
- o Students are being assessed on: effective use of paragraphs, use of interesting and appropriate vocabulary, matching style and tone to the reader (specified in the question), accuracy of spelling and punctuation.

Ways to revise:

- o memorise a list of connective words and phrases
- o Practise spellings: look, cover, write, check
- o Use AFOREST techniques in exam answers – when revising, ask someone for an issue or opinion then invent an argument which includes these techniques.
- o Look at past answers from lessons and redraft and improve them.



# Section B: Writing (20%)

## Creating Texts

### A/A\* Grade – Whole Text

- o Confident appropriate tone
- o Formal and informal styles, as appropriate
- o Understanding of genre (eg newspapers, ghost stories)
- o Clearly organised – eg layout, and sophisticated discourse markers (eg *however, although, despite this*)

Getting  
an A/A\*

# Section B: Writing (20%)

## Creating Texts

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- o Clearly organised – eg layout, and sophisticated language use  
markers (eg *however, although*)

Key Word - Variety

# Section B: Writing (20%)

## Creating Texts

### A/A\* Grade - Sentencing

- o Variety of sentence types
- o Variety of sentence structures
- o Variety of sentence lengths
- o Confident punctuation to assist the reader's understanding

Getting  
an A/A\*

# Section B: Writing (20%)

## Creating Texts

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Key Word - Variety

Getting  
an A/A\*

# Section B: Writing (20%)

## Creating Texts

### A/A\* Grade – Word Level

- o Lively, often unexpected, but not over-elaborate
- o Well-chosen verbs, rather than heavy use of adverbs
- o Confident use of abstract nouns, when appropriate
- o Correct spelling

Getting  
an A/A\*

# Section B: Writing (20%)

## Creating Texts

### A/A\* Grade – Word Level

- o Lively, often unexpected, but not over-elaborate
- o Well-chosen verbs, rather than heavy use of adverbs
- o Confident use of abstract nouns, when appropriate
- o Not excessive use of modification
- o Correctly spelt

Key Word - Variety

# Writing: So what is A\*?

- 1) A\* writers are fluent, assured, confident and often quirky. They take risks in their writing.
- 2) Most importantly, A\* writers use a **variety of simple and complex sentences**. Sentence variety is the key. They may start a paragraph with a short, simple sentence. They may use some sentences which coordinate ideas with “and”, “but” or “or”. They will also use complex sentences. But the key is variety – no single style dominates.
- 3) A\* writers use **vocabulary** which is descriptive (but not too flowery), precise, visual and occasionally unexpected. They use simple, familiar words as well as more complex ones. Their writing helps us to see what they are describing or to understand the ideas they are explaining

# Writing: A\* and not A\*

This **is** A\* writing: *Describe the room you are in.*

*This room is prisonlike. It feels somehow as if I am trapped here, imprisoned, even though the window is open, the door ajar, and a breeze drifts in from outside. All the same it is a prison, a place where I am locked each evening until I've completed my homework. It ought to be a private place of enjoyable study; instead, sadly, with the exams looming, it's a place I loathe.*

(= variety of sentences, variety of vocabulary)

This **isn't** A\* writing: *Describe the room you are in.*

*The room is small and like a prison. I feel as if I am trapped here because of all the work I have to do before the exams. A window and door are open and there is a soft breeze but it still feels to me like a prison cell.*

(= lack of variety of sentences and predictable vocabulary)



## 8 Ways of Adding Pzazz to Your Writing For an A\* at GCSE

- 1) Start with descriptive detail
- 2) Use eye-catching similes/metaphors
- 3) Use vivid but not over-the-top vocabulary
- 4) Play around with point-of-view
- 5) Use sentence variety (short & long)
- 6) Start some sentences with a phrase
- 7) Use a mix of statements, questions, dialogue, statistics, quotations:
- 8) Show that you understand how punctuation works:

# Key Tips

- o Always plan your response (by paragraphs to ensure you use them)
- o Spend less time on the first writing task than on the second
- o Always proof read your work: check for spelling, capital letters and punctuation.
- o Who is your target audience? Make sure your writing suits them.
- o Avoid slang and 'ordinary' vocabulary.
- o Practise writing timed responses so that you can work under pressure.

# English Language: A/A\* Writing Checklist

## Text-level

- o Confident appropriate tone
- o Formal and informal styles, as appropriate
- o Understanding of genre (eg newspapers, ghost stories)
- o Clearly organised – eg layout, and sophisticated discourse markers (eg however, although, despite this)

## Sentence-level

- o Variety of sentence types
- o Short sentences used more than in C and F work
- o Confident punctuation to assist the reader's understanding – esp parenthetical commas, colons, semi-colons. No use of the comma splice

## Word-level

- o Lively, often unexpected, but not over-elaborate
- o Well-chosen verbs, rather than heavy use of adverbs
- o Confident use of abstract nouns, when appropriate
- o Not excessive use of modification
- o Correctly spelt

# English Literature: A/A\*

## English Literature: A/A\* Checklist

- o Show a detailed knowledge and understanding of text ... supported by quotations ... and a relish for the language of the text.
- o Show your ability to use a formal, analytical style in writing about literature

To summarise:  
*A/A\* students need to*

- consider alternative interpretations in language analysis
- evaluate the writer's techniques
- use technical vocabulary to describe language
- independently analyse texts and be original in their interpretations
- use sophisticated vocabulary
- experiment with language for effect
- be original and varied in their writing

# Revision

- o Useful revision websites include:
- o The SRC See Mrs Victor for your password

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/>

<http://www.englishbiz.co.uk/>

<http://www.s-cool.co.uk/gcse>

<http://www.geoffbarton.co.uk/student-resources.php>

<http://www.youtube.com/DreamTeachers>

# Final Revision Hints

## *before the exams*

- ❖ Good revision is active. Test yourself on key ideas and concepts. Say them aloud. Pretend you are teaching the topic to someone else. Get your mum or dad to test you.
- ❖ Make a list of the key words that will make you sound like an authority (eg in English Literature use the word “**suggests**” instead of saying “the poet **says**”).
- ❖ Get in shape for exams. Get enough sleep. Eat slightly less. Bring water to keep your brain fresh.

# Final Revision Hints *in the exams*

- o Listen to instructions.
- o When you open the exam paper, don't start answering: instead look through the questions to calm your nerves and see how much you have to do. Get a feel for the paper.
- o In your answer book label the first page "Rough notes". Use this to write down any key ideas or words that you will need to refer to.
- o Look at how many marks an answer has: give more time to questions that will earn you more marks.
- o Answer all questions: don't leave any blank, even if you think you can't answer it.



# Final Revision Hints

## writing style

- o Remember that your writing skills will be really important in many exams. Try to avoid using long sentences that are joined with “and” and “but”.
- o Instead try to start and end paragraphs with short sentences (“The two poems are quite similar”).
- o Use connectives that will take your writing to a higher level: “as, although, because, when, so, despite”. Example 1: “This sentence would get a grade C, but it’s not that bad”. Example 2: “Although this sentence would get a grade A, it’s not so different from the previous one”.
- o In literature, use short quotations embedded in your normal sentence (one or two words) to show that you really know the text.
- o In most writing avoid saying “I”. Keep it impersonal. Instead of “*I think the poem is old-fashioned because ...*”, say “*The poem is old fashioned because ...*”)