

## Doing Better in GCSE English Language

In the examinations, you will be assessed on Reading and Writing only. To achieve a grade C you need to be confident in all these aspects.

| Reading   |  |
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| Can I?  | What can I do to improve?  |
| Set about reading a text in the best way and keep going even if it gets difficult.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When I read what's on the exam paper, ask myself: What is this text for? Who is it for?</li> <li>• Decide whether I need to read closely, skim read or just scan the text.</li> <li>• Guess the meaning of words I don't know by thinking what would make sense.</li> <li>• Go back to the beginning of the paragraph if I find I have lost the meaning.</li> </ul>   |
| Show that I understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what the text clearly states;</li> <li>• what the text suggests;</li> </ul> by writing clear answers to questions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highlight the key words in the question (eg <i>Explain why</i>) so that my answer is to the point. Before I start writing, think: Is this really what the question is about?</li> <li>• If I can't find the answer directly in the author's words, do some detective work and try to find where the answer is suggested by something else in the text.</li> <li>• Remember that opinions are just what somebody or some people believe. If they are trying to persuade me, they may present their opinions so they look like facts. I must be able to distinguish between fact and opinion</li> </ul> |
| Back up what I say by giving examples and explaining them.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If it fits the question, use the PEE formula:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This is my <b>point</b>.</li> <li>- Here is an <b>example</b> from the text.</li> <li>- Here is a comment to <b>explain</b> the example.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If I need to quote, make it as short as possible - it may be quicker just to refer to a line, sentence or paragraph.</li> </ul>  |
| Find the important bits of information in texts and put them together in my own words.<br><b>Never copy large sections of the text</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scan texts and skim read until I have located the information I need for the question. Mark the sentences or paragraphs and read them carefully.</li> <li>• Use good connectives to help write my answer. <i>Whereas, On the other hand, Instead of</i> are useful links if I am saying that the information is different in two texts. <i>Similarly, Likewise, In</i></li> </ul>   |

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|   | <i>the same way</i> area useful if the texts are saying more or less the same.  |
| <p>Make comments about the way a writer has chosen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to use words;</li> <li>to set out their writing and present it to the reader.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make sure my comment is about the <b>effect</b> of the author's special use of words or presentation. For example, don't say: <i>It's a good description because there are lots of adjectives.</i> Say: <i>The many adjectives make the description richer and more detailed so the reader can imagine the scene more easily.</i></li> </ul> |

| <b>Writing</b>  |   |
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| <b>Can I?</b>   | <b>What can I do to improve?</b>  |
| Collect ideas and plan a piece of writing that will hold the interest of my reader. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the way of planning that I find easiest. It might be a list of bullet points or some kind of diagram. Put all my ideas down quickly, then cross out what I don't like and organise the rest into the best order.</li> <li>Use the information in the question to help me think of ideas.</li> <li><i>Who? What? Where? When? Why? And How?</i> These are questions that can sometimes help to generate ideas.</li> <li>Respect the reader. Include all the information they need. Make it make sense.</li> </ul> |
| Write in different ways.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revise the key features of different types of writing so I can include them in my work.</li> <li>By thinking about the purpose and the intended readership of my writing, decide how formal and/or impersonal it needs to be. Adapt my writing to match this. Remember not to use the language of ordinary speech if I am writing formally. For example: We <b>say</b>, 'Thanks a lot!' In a formal letter we <b>write</b>, 'I am most grateful'.</li> </ul>   |
| Add interest by choosing the best words and by the way I write sentences.           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I will need to write quickly, but I should stop sometimes and think: Is that the best word I can use? Can I write something more powerful, more unusual, more exact?</li> <li>Vary the length of my sentences - using short, simple sentences for emphasis and longer sentences to link ideas together.</li> <li>Start my sentences in different ways. Don't always start with the subject and the verb of the main clause.</li> <li>Use interesting connectives</li> </ul>  |
| Make my writing very clear by using paragraphs and punctuation.                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Think about paragraphs while I am planning and before I actually start the writing.</li> <li>Remember to start a new paragraph for a change of time, change of topic, change of speaker.</li> <li>Look at my longer sentences to see whether a comma</li> </ul>  |

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|  | <p>between clauses or to separate a phrase from the rest of the sentence would help to make them clearer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Don't use commas instead of connectives.</li><li>• Check that I have remembered other punctuation like speech marks and apostrophes.</li><li>• Always remember to use capital letters for sentence starts and proper nouns.</li></ul>   |
| <p>Write neatly and keep the number of spelling mistakes down.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I may be nervous in the exam, but I shouldn't write so quickly that it is hard to read. I won't lose marks for crossing out mistakes.</li><li>• Know which words I am sometimes careless with. Look closely at these when I read through my writing.</li><li>• If there are common words that always trouble me (eg How many f's and t's in <i>graffiti</i>? How do you spell <i>necessary</i>?), make sure I have got a way of remembering what is correct.</li><li>• Don't avoid using an excellent word because I am unsure of the spelling; but do make sure that I don't make mistakes in simple, common words that I could be expected to know.</li></ul> |