

Head Teacher  
Andrew Moss MEd

Tel: 01276 858084  
Fax: 01276 855335



Gordon's School  
West End  
Woking  
Surrey  
GU24 9PT

The National Memorial to General Gordon  
Patron: Her Majesty The Queen

20<sup>th</sup> March 2018

Dear Parents of GCSE Students

### Re: GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature

I am writing to inform you about the GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature courses that students have been examined on from May 2017. These new courses represent a major change from GCSE English courses in the past with the abandonment of coursework entirely and the arrival of 100% terminal exams (four papers in all), alongside 'closed book' assessment where students have to learn quotations. Exam questions are 'tougher' in many respects with more 'unseen' texts that require considerable skills of 'on-the-spot' comprehension and analysis. More weight is also being placed on accurate written expression. There is some truth in the idea that the new courses are like a return to the old O Levels.

Students in Years 10 and 11 can help themselves to prepare for these new-style exams in various ways outside their English lessons. This work is vital in fact if students are to obtain good grades, which are on the new grading scale that has Grade 9 at the top and more grades at the higher end of the scale as well.

I encourage the use of a good general GCSE English revision guide. I recommend: *Collins AQA GCSE Revision English Language & Literature* by Paul Burns (ISBN 9780008112561). (The Collins' *Snap Revision* series is also good.) Practising with 'specimen papers' is crucial for English Language in particular and this revision guide contains some of these. The exam board's website is also very important, providing the official specimen exam papers (as there are no widely available past papers yet), alongside other resources: <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-language-8700>  
<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-literature-8702>

All GCSE students at Gordon's School also have an English Language textbook (*Get the Grade! AQA GCSE English LANGUAGE*, editor Keith Brindle, Hodder Education) that gives in-depth support for each part of the two GCSE English Language exam papers. The whole textbook deals with each of the questions on the Language exam papers. Those students who spend time working on English Language specimen exam papers, using these in conjunction with the textbook and an exam guidance booklet on how to answer the questions on the English Language papers (that we have given the students) will put themselves in a strong position for the exams.

Given the additional importance now attached to Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar, plus the importance of this as a life skill, any time that students devote to improving their written expression is time well spent. CGP's *SPaG Workbook for GCSE* (ISBN 9781782942191) is recommended to hone specific skills.

/...2

With the GCSE English Literature set texts all being assessed in exams, most of which are ‘closed book’ exams, it has never been more important for students to build up a strong, detailed knowledge of their set texts. Together with rereading the set texts, students should also acquire study guides on these set texts and take notes from these study guides, along with identifying key quotations that must then be learnt. Practising with specimen paper questions by planning out answers is important as well. These are good revision strategies, but students must be aware that with so many exams holiday time sooner rather than later might be the ideal time to start to prepare for the GCSE exams. The set text ‘study guides’ that we recommend are the York Notes for GCSE series: *Macbeth* (ISBN 9781447982203), *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (ISBN 9781447982180), *An Inspector Calls* (ISBN 9781447982166) and *Power and Conflict AQA Poetry Anthology* (ISBN 9781292138053).

Parents can certainly get involved in the learning – and revision – process for English; indeed, this would be valuable support for your child. Working with your child on their writing in English would be a way to help. Similarly, reading and talking about ‘broadsheet’ newspaper articles would be useful preparation for the ‘Reading’ sections of the English Language Papers.

Yours sincerely,

Mr P Berry

Head of English

English Language – Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing (80 marks: 50%) 1hr45mins	English Language – Paper 2: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives (80 marks: 50%) 1hr45mins	English Literature – Paper 1: Shakespeare and the 19 <sup>th</sup> Century Novel (64 marks: 40%) 1hr45mins	English Literature – Paper 2: Modern Texts and Poetry (96 marks: 60%) 2hrs15mins
<p>Section A: Reading (40 marks) One literature fiction text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 1 short question (4 marks)</li> <li>❖ 2 long questions (8 marks each)</li> <li>❖ 1 extended question (20 marks)</li> </ul>	<p>Section A: Reading (40 marks) Two linked texts (one non-fiction and one literary non-fiction)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 1 short question (4 marks)</li> <li>❖ 2 long questions (8 marks and 12 marks)</li> <li>❖ 1 extended question (20 marks)</li> </ul>	<p>Section A: Shakespeare <i>Macbeth</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 1 essay question</li> <li>❖ Extract provided</li> <li>❖ Write in detail about the extract from the play and then the play as a whole</li> <li>❖ 30 marks content</li> <li>❖ 4 marks for SPaG</li> <li>❖ No copy of text allowed in exam</li> </ul>	<p>Section A: Modern Texts <i>An Inspector Calls</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 1 essay question from a choice of 2, 1 hr</li> <li>❖ 1 question focuses on character and 1 question focuses on themes</li> <li>❖ 30 marks for content</li> <li>❖ 4 marks for SPaG</li> <li>❖ No copy of text allowed in exam</li> </ul>
<p>Section B: Writing (40 marks) Descriptive or Narrative writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 1 extended writing question</li> <li>❖ 24 marks for content</li> <li>❖ 16 marks for SPaG</li> </ul>	<p>Section B: Writing (40 marks) Writing to present a Viewpoint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 1 extended writing question</li> <li>❖ 24 marks for content</li> <li>❖ 16 marks for SPaG</li> </ul>	<p>Section B: 19<sup>th</sup> Century Novel <i>Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 1 essay question</li> <li>❖ Extract provided</li> <li>❖ Write in detail about the extract from the novel and then the novel as a whole</li> <li>❖ 30 marks content</li> <li>❖ No copy of text allowed in exam</li> </ul>	<p>Section B: Poetry <i>Conflict and Power</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 1 comparative essay question, 45 mins</li> <li>❖ 1 named poem then choice of second poem (list provided)</li> <li>❖ 30 marks</li> </ul> <p>Section C: Unseen Poetry (30 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 1 question on an unseen poem (24 marks)</li> <li>❖ 1 question comparing this poem to second unseen poem (8 marks)</li> </ul>

**NB:** Spoken Language component – presentation. Assessed, although no weighting. Must complete for GCSE English Language to stand.