

How do I help my child with their GCSE English courses?

The GCSE English Language and English Literature are two separate qualifications which are assessed at the end of Year 11 through examination. There is no longer a coursework unit or tiering. Both literature exams are closed book and the language exams contain unseen material. The writing tasks are heavily assessed on spelling, punctuation and grammar. Students are therefore facing challenges with more difficult texts and skills than at KS3. Your help is vital to assist what English teachers are delivering in class. The following list suggests what you can do to help your child and further information on where to find resources and the course content.

English Language Paper 1 and 2:

Reading section:

- Look at the wider reading lists on the English department area of the website and select with your child some fiction/non-fiction that may interest them. The library has a varied range of different genres and books for various age groups/abilities.
- Encourage your child to listen to audiobooks
- Read a book together and discuss what you both think of the plot, characters and the way the writer tells the story. What do you think of the opening/ending? Why do you like/dislike the text?
- Encourage your child to read a range of broadsheet newspapers on a variety of different subjects. Discuss the type of language a journalist might use to get across a point of view, for example level of formality, factual language, use of bias.

Writing section:

- Google an image e.g a spooky place. Encourage your child to make a list of adjectives that would be useful to describe it.
- Discuss why those words would be effective and use a dictionary to add to the original list.

- Ask your child to make a list of spellings that they find difficult or tend to get wrong. The method of look/cover/write/check is really effective. A spelling dictionary is also a useful resource to have in the home.

English Literature:

- Encourage theatre visits, particularly to see Shakespeare plays
- Encourage your child to read widely using the lists on the website in the English department area.
- Perhaps read the set 19th century text aloud together (see set text list on the website) and discuss difficult words and easier synonyms to help them access the text better
- Discuss their opinions about characters, plot and how the story is told
- Watch film adaptations of set texts
- Encourage your child to keep a reading log of their set texts e.g what happens in each scene/chapter
- Diagrams and mind maps are a useful way of linking ideas/themes in poems, prose and drama and are a good visual aid
- Read through your child's notes in their exercise books and encourage them to do the same to consolidate their learning. This is also a good opportunity to discuss their teacher's feedback and targets. It's also worth monitoring the organisation of their notes for revision purposes!
- For learners targeting the higher grades of 6-9, a good idea is to read literary criticism on set texts. Students can find these in the library with the help of the librarian. Critical reading like this is very advanced; however you could read and discuss some of this material so that your child is approaching texts at a higher level.
- Listen to audiopi, a podcast resource which covers all set texts. Go to audiopi.co.uk. Login: staidans@audiopi.co.uk Password: staidans

Course outlines, wider reading lists, set text/revision textbook lists, extension tasks and rationale for grouping in Year 10 can all be found on the English department area of the website.

Your child's teacher will be continually adding resources and tasks to their class Teams throughout the course.

Websites like Bitesize: www.bbc.co.uk/education and www.shakespearesglobe.com are useful online resources.