



Help! I've only started my study now

Don't panic. While you may feel that you have nothing done at this stage, remember that you have been studying this course for three years. This means that you have been building up your writing and analytical skills over this time and that will serve you well in the exam.

Quite a significant amount of the English exam is unseen. On paper one, you will be answering questions on an unfamiliar reading text. In each section of paper two (drama, fiction and poetry), half of the total marks awarded are allocated to the unseen texts.

Some students get intimidated by the unfamiliar texts on the paper and feel that they should already know it. Make sure that you read each unseen text carefully and at least twice. Underline the key words in the question and be careful that you answer exactly what the question asks.

Keep an eye on the marks allocated to each question. Obviously, a 20-mark question should be longer than a 10-mark question and so you should spend slightly more time on it.

Do not skip questions. Always write something to answer the question. The examiner has no choice but to award you zero marks if you write nothing down. Always attempt an answer, even if you are not sure.

If you have a few weeks to go before your mocks there are certain things you can do:

- ◆ Go through your poetry. Learn the poets and titles of the poems. Know what each poem is about and some of the language skills displayed in each poem.
- ◆ Revise the plot and characters of both the novel and play you have studied.
- ◆ Revise the language skills required for paper one: letter writing, speeches, reviews, etc.

Study tips and getting to know your papers

After the mock, it is quite easy to get caught up in the mass panic and become overwhelmed by the size of the course. The key to avoiding this is to break down your course into smaller, more manageable pieces.

The first step is to know your exam paper.

At higher level, English is broken down into two papers. Paper one covers reading comprehension, personal writing, functional writing and Media Studies.

Paper two deals with the study of the literature aspects of the course and has questions on drama, fiction and poetry.

There are certain key concepts with which you must be familiar for each of these sections, and this should form the basis of your study plan in the run up to your mock exams.

As paper one deals mainly with skills that you have learned over the three years of the course, it is advised that you look over any work you have previously done in this area to familiarise yourself with what is expected.

Your study plan should include the following areas:

◆ **For paper one:** familiarise yourself with the different writing styles required on the paper.

These include letter-writing, reviewing, speech-writing, short stories, etc.



Know what is required from each style, such as the format of a formal letter, and how to write a speech for a debate.

For the Media Studies section, learn the key terms and concepts for advertisements, newspapers, cartoons and other elements of the mass media, such as logos, slogans, tabloids, broadsheets, etc.

◆ **For paper two:** being familiar with the plot of both the play and the novel you have studied is essential.

You should be able to describe the characters, outline themes in the text and show changes that have taken place over the duration of the text.

You should be able to support all of your answers with reference to the play or novel, so you should set about learning some key quotations to use in your answer.

It helps if these are quotations that interest you, as you will be able to write about them in an interesting way.

For the poetry section you should know, in detail, a selection of poetry covering various themes, such as childhood, war, love and so on.

You should also be aware of the skills of the poet, such as his/her use of imagery, and be able to comment on them. You need to learn quotations to support your answer.