



ILKLEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

A MOORLANDS LEARNING TRUST SCHOOL

# How to revise English



A suggested set of activities to maximise the impact of your revision

Dear Year 11,

We have produced this guide to help you get the most out of your English revision.

We know that many of you are already revising, so we wanted to make sure you're revising in ways that will benefit you the most when the exams come round.

English is a combination of knowledge and skills. We can teach you the skills to write great answers during class time, but without having deep knowledge of your set texts, it's very difficult to show off those skills. By having detailed knowledge of your texts you are setting yourself up for success.

Research tells us that reading over notes is not effective revision; very little knowledge is retained this way.

To be revising successfully, you need to be **actively** revising – that is, turning information into new formats, grouping, categorising, quizzing, mind-mapping and note-taking. These strategies are all proven to work if used regularly. You can do this any way that works for you: using an iPad, on big paper with coloured pens, using cuecards.

Research also tells us that revision is best chunked into short manageable tasks. Doing 'little and often' is much more effective than cramming.

Remember your English exams are 'closed book', so you need to know the following:

- Macbeth (MOCK EXAM JANUARY)
  - Power and Conflict poetry (15 poems)
  - Modern text (*Inspector Calls* or *Lord of the Flies*)
- 19<sup>th</sup> Century text (*Sign of Four* or *Jekyll and Hyde*) (MOCK EXAM JANUARY)
  - Language Paper 1: how to answer each question + timings
- Language Paper 2: how to answer each question + timings (MOCK EXAM JANUARY)

We've designed the knowledge organisers to help you understand what knowledge you'll need for each text. We hope you find them a useful revision tool. Remember you should supplement the ideas, quotations and knowledge on the organisers using revision guides, revision videos and class notes.

All of the activities suggested in this booklet are effective ways to revise. Talk to your English teacher about the revision you are doing and ask them if you need any further support.

Remember you can access practice questions and more revision materials on our website.

Good luck with your revision!

*The English Department*

<https://www.ilkleygrammarschool.com/students/curriculum/english/>

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## Where to find revision materials

1. Your **knowledge organisers** contain the basic knowledge you need for each text. This is an important starting point for your revision.
2. **Revision Guides/cards**: you may have bought these from school. If you haven't, we recommend either CGP or York Notes guides. You can get these cheaply on Amazon.
3. **IGS English Revision Hub** (link below). Knowledge organisers, practice question banks and printable revision materials.
4. **Your exercise books**: essays, handouts, worksheets, quote banks, context notes.
5. **Youtube**: Mr Bruff's videos are best. Others do also exist! Try CourseHero.
6. **BBC Bitesize**: type in 'BBC Bitesize Macbeth/Sign of Four/etc'. Useful revision materials and little quizzes.
7. **Sparknotes** – type in what you want eg 'Sparknotes character analysis Macbeth'
8. **AQA website**: past papers, mark schemes, example answers (link below)



IGS English Revision  
Hub



Mr Bruff playlists



AQA past paper  
search

## Self-quizzing

Test yourself on what you know about each text. You should self-test regularly in small chunks. This is the most effective way to make learning stick!

Take one section at a time of the knowledge organiser for a text and write down what you know.

### Look/cover/write/check:

- LOOK at the knowledge organiser. Read the information on the section you've chosen.
- COVER the information
- WRITE down what you remember!
- CHECK what you've written – did you miss anything out? Correct anything that's wrong and add anything you missed.

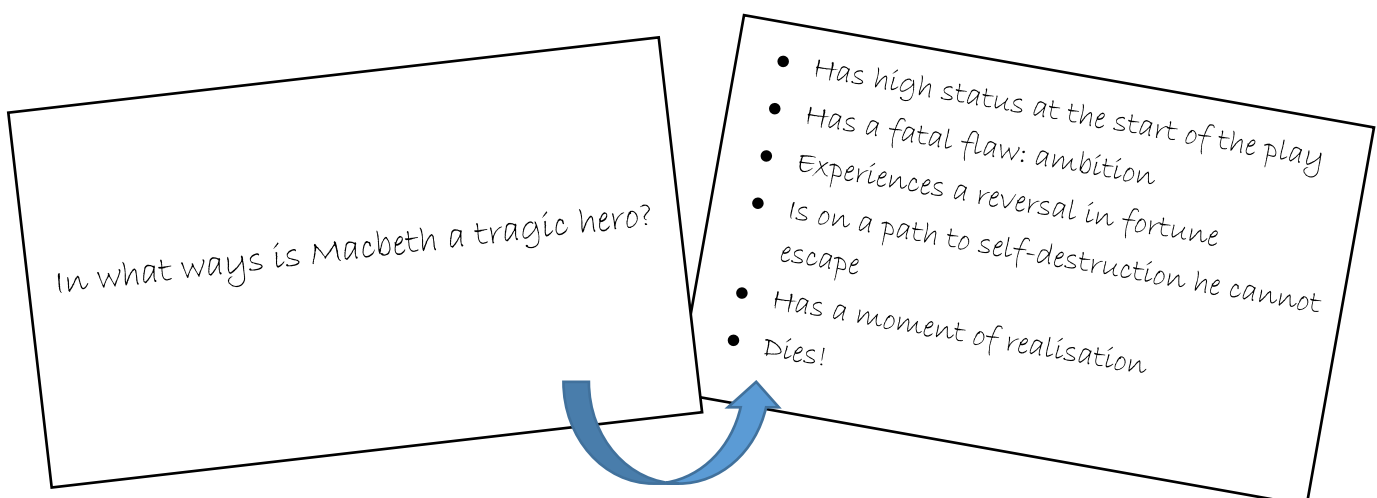
## Quizzing

Create a 20 question quiz on the information you've learned during a revision session. On the back of the sheet, write down the answers. Go back to the quiz the next day and test yourself. Now leave a gap of a week and test yourself again. What did you remember? What did you forget? Create a new 'master quiz' each week with the questions from each topic that you forgot.

## Quizlet

Create a set of revision cards for each text using the information on the knowledge organiser. Consider what will go on the front of each card and the back. It might be useful to ask yourself questions with the answers on the back.

You can also do this the old-fashioned way with cue cards.

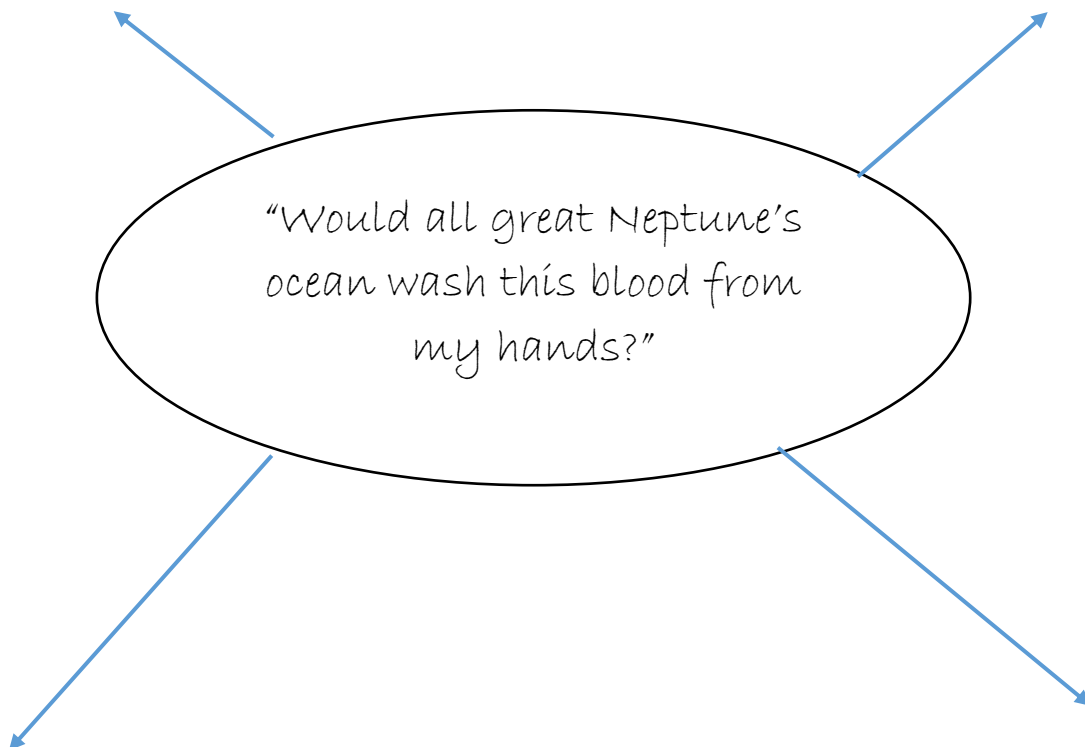


## Quotation revision

Write down a quotation from the knowledge organiser in the middle of a piece of paper.

Then, around the outside, write down the answers to these questions.

1. What is the literal meaning of this quotation?
2. Zoom in – any key words or techniques that are important?
3. Who/what is it about and when does it appear in the text? Be as precise as you can.
4. What does your quotation reveal about the character/theme **at this point** in the text?
5. Where does this quotation fit into the **sequence of events** in the text?
6. What was the author's intention in your quotation? Does it link to a wider idea or theme?
7. Shorten it: if you only remember a few words from the quotation, which ones should they be?
8. What other quotations do you know that link to this one? You could find some from your class notes or a revision guide. Give reasons for your links.



## Quotation pairs

Look at the quotations on your knowledge organiser.

Organise the quotations into pairs, and give a reason for your pairing.

Then highlight the key words in each quotation you'd like to remember.

Quote 1	Quote 2	Reason
"fair is foul and foul is fair" (witches)	"so foul and fair a day I have not seen" (Macbeth)	Shakespeare links the witches with Macbeth here as they both use the same language choices, inviting the audience to make a link between the two.



## Quotation ordering

Write each quotation on the Knowledge Organiser onto a separate post-it note or cue card.

### 1: Structure

Now move them around and order them in the order they appear in the play/novel.

- You can use the 'plot summary' section of the knowledge organiser to help you with this activity.
- What do you notice about how the author has structured their text, based on this activity?
  - Are there any recurring motifs/ideas?
  - How do key characters change or develop?
  - How do the quotations link to the plot? E.g climax, resolution, etc.

### 2: Character map

- Find all the relevant quotations on the KO about a given character (Mr Birling for example).
- Order these in the order they appear in the play.
- Analyse – what do you notice about the order of these quotations? How does it link to the development of your character in the play?
- Push it further: other quotations not on the KO that are also about your character?
- Being judicious: which are most important and **why?**

### 3: Other ideas for mapping quotations:

- Make links/connections between the quotations (different coloured pens for different categories?)
- Jot each quotation down and surround each with at least **two linked quotations** NOT on the KO (from your notes or a revision guide)

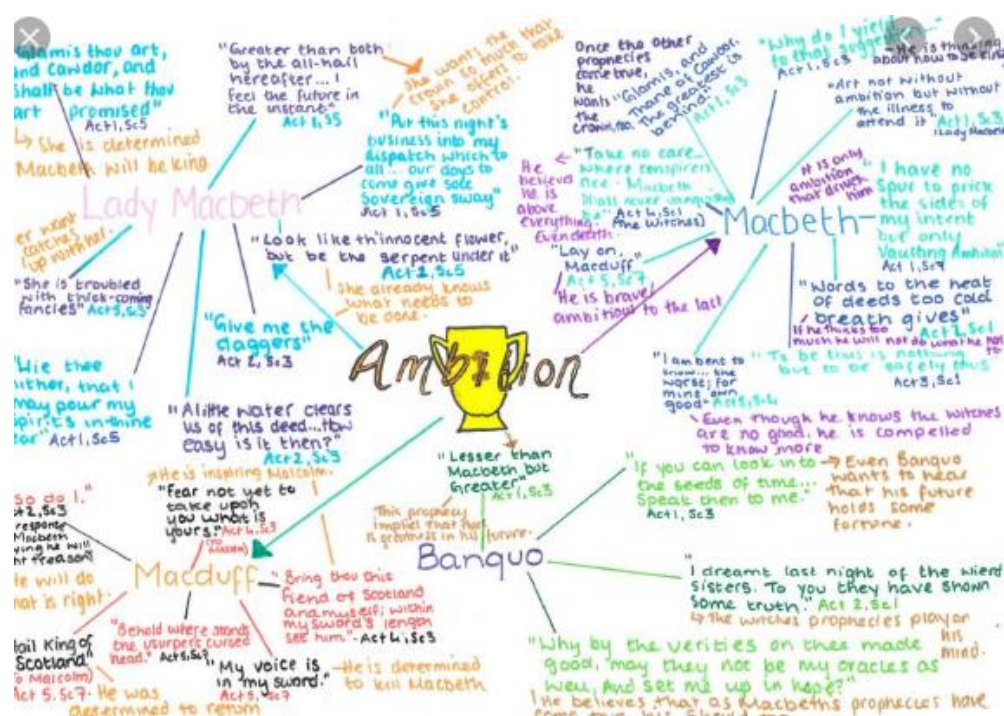




## Themes

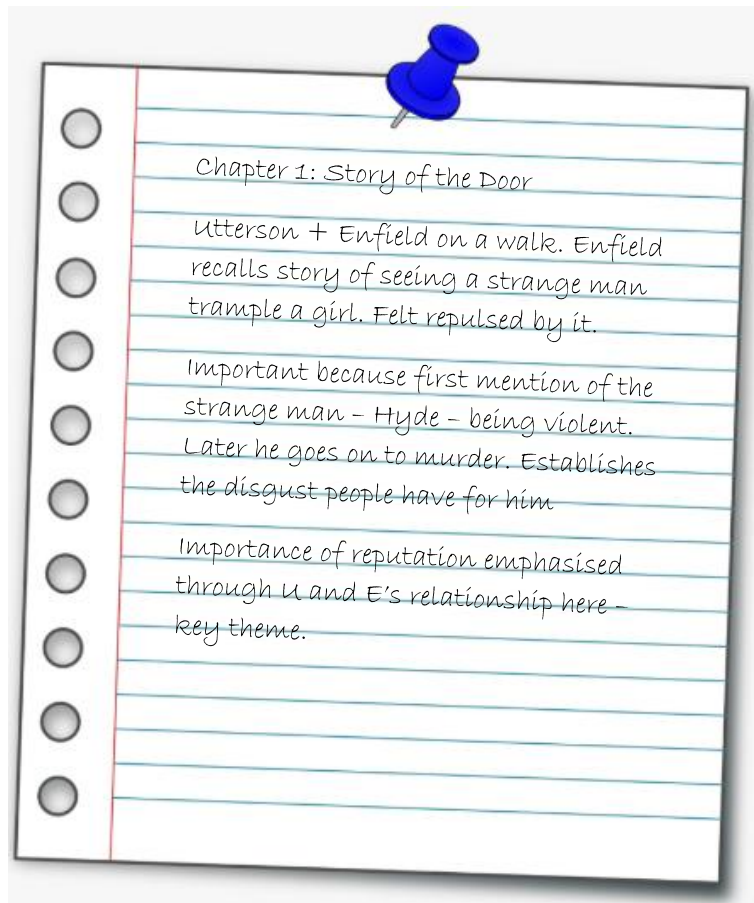
- Write down each theme from the knowledge organiser as a heading on a piece of paper.
- Bullet-point the key ideas of this theme on your paper. Do this without looking!
- Now go back and read the knowledge organiser for that theme. Add anything you missed!
- For each theme, jot down anything else from the Knowledge Organiser that could be linked to this theme. Eg. Quotations, key characters, key moments in the play/novel.
- Push yourself further: what else can you remember from the play/novel that could also be linked to this theme? You could use your revision guide, exercise book or the internet to help you.
- You can set it out as a table or a mindmap – whatever works for you!

Theme	Key ideas	Quotations linking to this theme	Key moments from the text linked with the theme



## Revising the plot

- For each chapter/act on your knowledge organiser:
  - Sum it up in a sentence- less than 20 words!
  - What is the most important part of this chapter/act and why?
  - What key themes are shown or developed by the writer in this chapter/act? Any repeated motifs?
  - How does this chapter/act drive the plot forward in some way?
  - How does it link to the chapters before it?



### Other plot ideas:

- Create a **timeline/flow chart** of the plot and add in key events, key scenes or key quotations as you go.
- Make sure you understand whether the plot is chronological, or if the structure of your text works in a different way, and why the writer has done this.

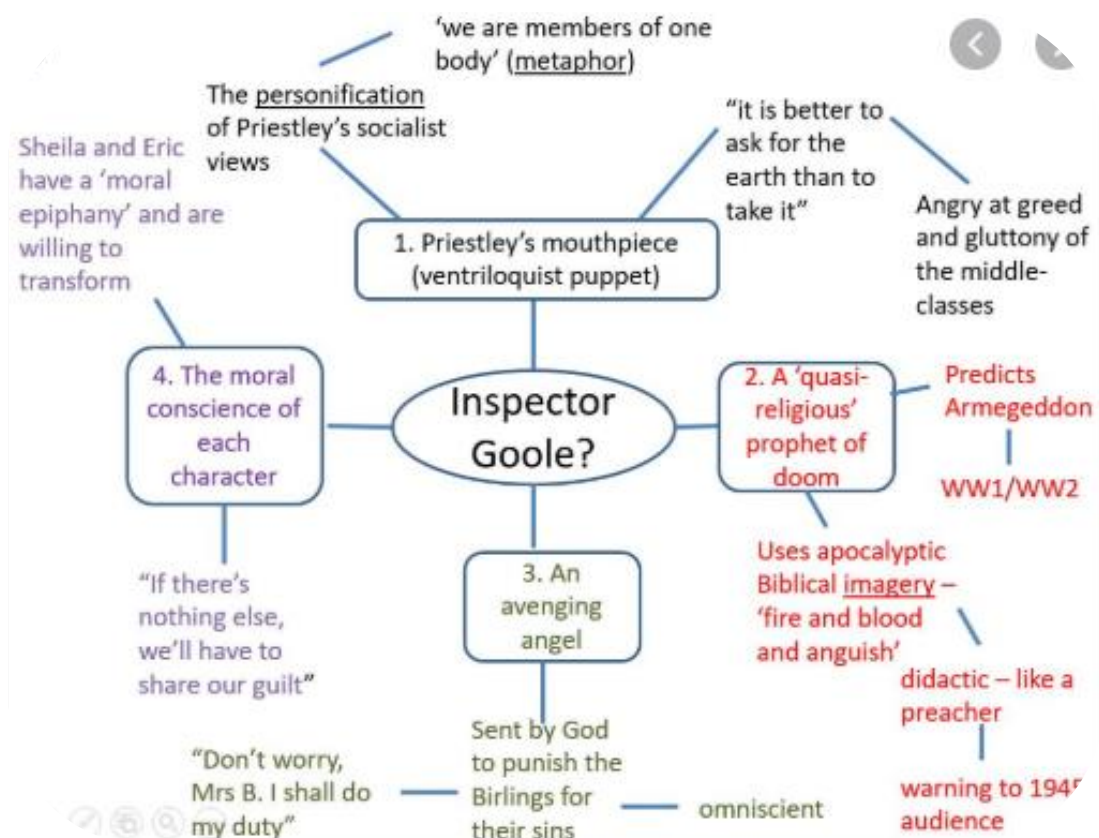
## Character Profiles

Create a character profile for each character in the novel/play. Design it however you like.

Include:

- The character's **function** in the novel/play eg. *Mr Birling is used to represent...*
- What **key ideas** the writer uses the character to explore
- Any **key words** linked to that character from the vocabulary bank or your own knowledge
- **Quotations** linked to the character (from the knowledge organiser and your wider knowledge)
- How the character changes/develops/stays the same throughout the novel/play

1. Write down whatever you can remember first
2. Then use the knowledge organiser to add ideas
3. Look/cover/write/check!
4. Finally add some further notes by watching Mr Bruff videos/using your revision guide/exercise book

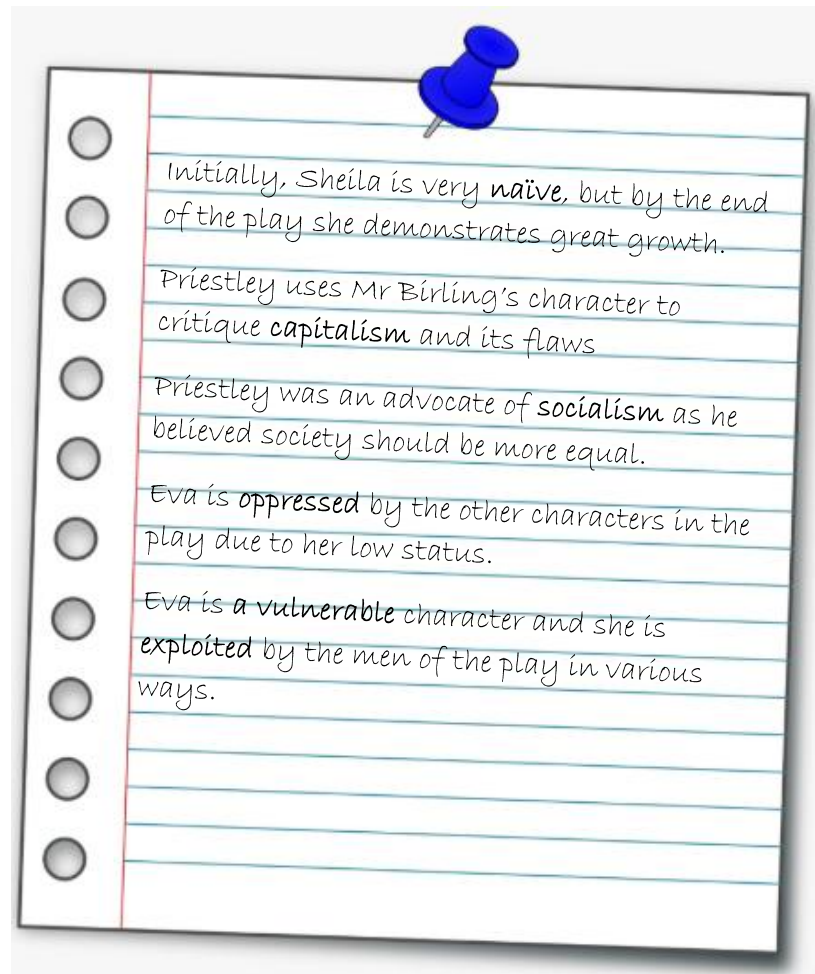


## Vocabulary Tasks

For each of the 'key vocabulary' words on the knowledge organiser, do the following:

1. Look it up and write down a definition for the word
2. Think of a synonym for that word
3. Write the word in a sentence about the text.

Naïve
Capitalism
Socialism
Oppressed
Vulnerable
Exploited



## Other vocabulary tasks

- Match up each key word with a theme or character in the play.
- Pair or group the key words into categories that make sense to you.
- Write a practice answer/practice thesis and **highlight** each key word you've used.





## Make better notes using the Cornell method

Revision videos are a great way to revise, but you need to do more than just watch them. It's important you make notes and then test yourself on those notes. You can also use this method to summarise important pages in revision guides or when you're looking through class notes.

### **The Cornell Method is as follows:**

Divide a piece of paper up as per below. Use the main 'Notes' section to make short notes whilst you watch the video. Write down the things you think are most important; be selective.

When you've finished watching, summarise what you've watched by bullet-pointing three key ideas from the video.

Now you need to fill in the final section: revision questions. Write yourself five questions that will test what you learnt in the video. This strip can then be used as your '5 a day' revision questions the next day – see if you remember what you've learnt!

The diagram shows a notepad divided into sections. At the top, the word **TITLE** is written in large red letters, with a small Date field to its right. The notepad is divided into three main horizontal sections. The top section is further divided into two columns. The left column is labeled **Keywords** and **Questions** in red. The right column contains handwritten notes: 

- Main notes
- ideally, using abbreviations
- Key thoughts

 A blue arrow points from the text 'Main notes section.' to the right column. The bottom section of the notepad is labeled **SUMMARY** in large blue letters. A blue arrow points from the text 'Summarise your learning here.' to this section. Another blue arrow points from the text 'Questions section. Fill this in last.' to the left column.

Questions section. Fill this in last.

Main notes section.

Summarise your learning here.

## **Poetry revision activities**

### **Links and connections**

Write down the names and authors of all fifteen poems on a piece of paper (without looking!)

Now make links and connections between each poem, thinking about what they have in common. It might be useful to consider themes, big ideas, tone, writer's intentions. You could use different colours to indicate different links.

### **First lines/last lines**

Can you remember the first and last lines from each poem? First and last lines are a really good place to start when comparing poems! Jot down the name of each poem and its first and last line – without looking!

### **Individual poems:**

Use the look/cover/write/check method to revise each individual poem. You need to know

- The 'big ideas' behind each poem – what was the poet trying to say?
- The tone
- Some key quotations
- Structure and form

### **Grouping quotations:**

Use your poetry knowledge organiser to create some cards with key quotations from each poem. Now move them around and try to group them or pair them. Some examples might be 'both these quotations show the horrific physical impacts of war' or 'both these quotations demonstrate the dangers of individual power'

### **Sum it up in a sentence:**

For each poem, sum up the key intentions behind the poem, being as specific as you can. For example:

'In *Remains*, Armitage explores the inevitable mental disintegration caused by war'

'In *Bayonet Charge*, Tennyson....'

'In *Poppies*, Weir explores.....through....'

## **Answering Practice Questions**

This is the most useful revision you can do, as it prepares you for the real thing. You can choose to write full answers, part answers or just essay plans. All are useful.

Access practise questions via the English Revision Hub. Use the planning format below to help you:

<b>Extract-based question (Macbeth, J&amp;H, SoF)</b>	<b>Non-extract question (Inspector Calls/LOTF)</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Read the question and underline key words so you understand what is being asked</li><li>2. Read the extract with the question in mind, looking for evidence that supports your ideas. Highlight evidence and make quick annotations</li><li>3. Plan answer: what is your 'big idea' in relation to the question? What evidence will you use from the extract? What references/quotations will you use from the wider text?</li><li>4. Write! Remember to start with a thesis (introduction) where you outline your big ideas and link to the writer's intentions.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Read the question carefully and underline key words so you understand what is being asked</li><li>2. Start planning your ideas. What is your 'big idea' in response to the question? Jot down a couple of bullet points</li><li>3. Now use your knowledge of the text to jot down some key evidence you'll use in your answer. This should be quotations and other references (eg. Referring to a part of the play/novel)</li><li>4. Write! Remember to start with a thesis (introduction) where you outline your big ideas and link to the writer's intentions.</li></ol>

<b>Poetry comparison (Lit Paper 2)</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Read the question carefully and underline key words so you understand what is being asked</li><li>2. Think very carefully about your choice of second poem. Which one has the most to say about whatever theme you've been asked about? Poem choice is critical!</li><li>3. Now go back to the printed poem. What key techniques/quotations in the poem help illustrate your 'big ideas' in relation to the question title? Highlight/annotate</li><li>4. Jot down some key ideas/quotations/references for your second poem.</li><li>5. Write! Remember your answer starts with a thesis (introduction) where you get to the heart of what each poem is saying about (theme) and be really specific. You also start to compare their messages/intentions here too.</li></ol>



## Unseen poetry practice questions

Download an unseen question from the English revision hub and follow the steps to practise writing an answer.

### Part 1: Question 27.1 – Analyse an unseen poem

1. Read **the question** carefully and highlight **key words/phrases**
  - ‘**Presents**’ means analyse the poem looking for **key quotations/language techniques** which you can explore in detail (extended metaphors and contrast are big favourites).
  - You may also find something interesting to write about the poem’s **form** and **structure**
  - ‘**Attitudes**’ means the poet’s view/ideas/meaning/message.
2. Read **the poem 2-3 times underlining and annotating** anything you will find useful to help you answer the question. (There is no need to plan).
3. Begin your answer by giving a **one sentence introduction**- in a nutshell *what is the poet’s meaning or message* in relation to the question.
4. Then deal with the ‘**how**’ / ‘**presents**’ part of the question working through the poem in order- try to analyse several techniques in detail.
5. If time, try to finish with a **final, punchy** concluding point.

### Part 2: Question 27.2- Compare a second unseen poem to the main unseen poem

**(8 marks, around 10 minutes) Steps:**

1. Read **the question** carefully and **highlight key words/phrases**
2. Read through the **second poem 2-3 times**, again underlining and annotating key words/phrases to help you with your response
  - Look for similarities and differences in the methods used to convey their ideas. These could be: lexical fields, extended metaphor, symbolism, tone, choice of speaker, structure – or something else.
  - Aim to write:
  - BOTH writers use....In (poem 1) this is shown in the quote “.....” the effect of this is .....whereas in (poem 2) this is shown “.....” the effect is.....  
ANOTHER SIMILARITY or a DIFFERENCE: Whilst (poem 1) uses X to show, (poem 2) uses Y to show..... This is shown in the quote “.....” This suggests.....

## **Self-assess your practice answers**

Use the grid below to self-assess your answers.

When you've finished, look back at your knowledge organiser. What else could you have included that you didn't? Has writing an answer revealed any gaps in your knowledge you need to work on?

Skill area	Tick/target
A clear thesis giving an answer to the question	
A link to the writer's intentions in the thesis	
Using the writer's name to show I understand the text is a construct by the writer	
Using more than one quotation to back up an interpretation/idea (PEZEZZ) This is further exemplified when...	
Links to context/writer's intentions only when relevant to my answer	
Detailed analysis of quotations (zooming in/identifying techniques/giving clear analysis of connotations/symbolism, etc)	
A thorough response – ideas explored in detail. At least two developed paragraph + thesis.	
<b>Aiming High:</b>	
Quotations/references integrated into paragraphs	
Most apt quotations chosen – short and snappy, showing I am ranging around the text	
Use of 'perhaps' to suggest alternative interpretations	
Perceptive, individual analysis of methods	
A concept/argument outlined in the thesis which is a thread running consistently through my essay	
A confident, assured written style	