





# Structure of the GCSEs Grades 1-9

✓ 2 separate GCSEs

✓ Language has 2 papers

✓ Literature has 2 papers



# Structure of the GCSEs Grades 1-9

2 separate GCSEs

**GCSE English Language**

Language  
Paper 1

1 hr 45mins

Language  
Paper 2

1 hr 45mins

**GCSE English Literature**

Literature  
Paper 1

1 hr 45mins

Literature  
Paper 2

2 hr 15mins



# GCSE English Language Paper 1

One extract usually a page long – C20th fiction

1 hour 45 minutes

80 marks - 50% of the qualification

Students answer 4 reading questions before completing a creative writing task.

**Section A Q1-4** 40 marks 1 hour

**Section B Q5** 40 marks 45 minutes

Language Paper 1 Practice Paper – The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck

Source A

This extract is from *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck. Set during the Great Depression, the story follows Tom Joad and his family, farmers who were forced out of their farm in Oklahoma to search for jobs in California. In this extract, a truck driver has stopped in a cafe. Outside is Tom Joad, who goes to wait by the driver's truck. He is dressed in new clothes and in need of a ride.

1 A HUGE RED TRANSPORT truck stood in front of the little roadside restaurant. The vertical exhaust pipe mottled sooty, and an almost invisible haze of steel-blue smoke hovered over its end. It was a new truck, shining red, and in twelve-inch letters on its sides — OKLAHOMA CITY TRANSPORT COMPANY. Its double tires were new, and a brass padlock stood straight out from the hinge on the big black doors. Inside the screened restaurant a radio played, quiet dance music turned low the way it is when no one is listening. A small outlet fan turned idly in its circular hole over the entrance, and flies buzzed excitedly about the doors and windows, butting the screens. Inside, one man, the truck driver, sat on a stool and rested his elbows on the counter and looked over his coffee at the lean and lonely waitress. He talked the smart listless language of the roadworkers to her. "I seen 'em about three months ago. He had a operation. Cut someone out. I forget what." And she—"Doesn't seem no bigger than a week I seen 'em myself. Looked fine then. He's a nice sort of a guy when he ain't stinks." Now and then the flies roared sofly at the screen door. The coffee machine spurted steam, and the waitress, without looking, reached behind her and shut it off.

20 Outside, a man walking along the edge of the highway crossed over and approached the truck. He walked slowly to the front of it, put his hand on the shiny fender, and looked at the No Riders sticker on the windshield. For a moment he was about to walk on down the road, but instead he sat on the running board on the side away from the restaurant. He was not over thirty. His eyes were very dark brown and there was a hint of brown pigment in his eyeballs. His cheek bones were high and wide, and strong deep lines cut down his cheeks. In curves beside his mouth. His upper lip was long, and since his teeth protruded, the lips stretched to cover them, for this man kept his lips closed. His hands were hard, with broad fingers and nails as thick and ridged as little clam shells. The space between thumb and forefinger and the hams of his hands were shiny with callus.

35 The man's clothes were new — all of them, cheap and new. His grey cap was so new that the visor was still stiff and the button still on, not shapeless and bulged as it would be when it had served for a while all the various purposes of a cap — carrying sack, towel, handkerchief. His suit was of cheap grey hardcloth and so new that there were creases in the trousers. His blue chambray shirt was stiff and smooth with fiber. The coat was too big, the trousers too short, for he was a tall man. The coat:

**This is the exam where readers of books have the edge - make reading part of your revision relaxation.**





# GCSE English Language Paper 1

## Section A **40 marks** **1 hour**

Questions focus primarily on:

- ✓ Q1: Multiple choice - extracting information **4 marks** **5 minutes**
- ✓ Q2: **Language analysis** – students analyse the effects of the writer’s choice of language.  
(What has the writer included? Why? How does it affect the reader?) **8 marks** **10 minutes**
- ✓ Q3: **Structure Analysis** –How and why does the writer change the focus for a specific reason?  
How does the writer change the atmosphere, perspective, setting etc to create an an effect? Eg tension **8 marks** **10 minutes**
- ✓ Q4: Personal response to the text **comment on an opinion** given about the text. **20 marks** **25 minutes**

**10 minutes reading time**





# GCSE English Language Paper 1

## Section B 40 marks 45 minutes

- ✓ Question 5 gives a choice of 2 writing tasks - a description or a narrative opening.
- ✓ Students need to plan their answer
- ✓ Other tips to help home revision:
  - Use all five senses - sensory language
  - Move from a general detail and zoom right into the object
  - Show not Tell
  - Refer to the consequence of the action, not the action itself...e.g “The curtains billowed wildly in the open window.” INSTEAD OF “It was windy.”
- ✓ The marks are allocated specifically, with 24 marks available for content and organisation and 16 marks for technical accuracy (spelling, punctuation and grammar).





# GCSE English Language Paper 2

Two extracts, both usually a page long –  
C20th/21st non-fiction and C19th non-fiction

1 hour 45 minutes

80 marks - **50%** of the qualification

English Language paper 2 explores non-fiction writers' viewpoints and perspectives.

**Section A** consists of 4 questions

**Section B** consists of a single question where the students need to write their own text, giving their own perspective, for a specified audience, purpose and form.

**Section A** Q1-4 40 marks 1 hour

**Section B** Q5 40 marks 45 minutes





**Two extracts on a similar topic/theme.**

**Questions focus primarily on:**

- ✓ **Q1:** The focus will be on a small part of source A  
The students are asked to select four true statements from a selection of eight.  
(True/False) **4 marks 5 minutes**
  
- ✓ **Q2:** Students are asked to write a **summary of the differences or similarities** between something/ someone in source A and something/ someone in source B.  
**No language analysis.**
- ✓ Identify 3-4 differences or similarities, summarise each of the differences in turn, with quotations, and explore **perceptive inferences** from both texts.  
**8 marks 10 minutes**





Two extracts on a similar topic/theme.

Questions focus primarily on:

- ✓ **Q3: Language Analysis** - need to analyse the effects of the writer's choice of language.  
**12 marks 13 minutes**
- ✓ **Q4:** This question will always ask the students to “compare how the **writers convey their different perspectives/attitudes** about...” something specific to the sources. They need to perceptively compare the writers' different perspectives or attitudes, and most importantly, comment on the methods the writers use to convey their different perspectives or attitudes. They can analyse any methods, including both language and structure.  
**16marks 18 minutes**

About **15 minutes reading time**





**Question 5** provides an opportunity to show the examiner how they can write effectively to **explain their point of view on a specific issue**.

There will be a statement on an issue related to those discussed in section A.

The task will be to write in a specific form, for a specific audience, to present their point of view on the issue.

They might be asked to write a newspaper article, letter or speech.

The marks are allocated specifically, with **24 marks available for content and organisation** and **16 marks for technical accuracy** (spelling, punctuation and grammar).

### Things to remember for home revision:

- match style of writing to the purpose and audience of the task
- plan the answer first
- leave the full 45 minutes to complete the task fully
- use ambitious vocabulary, language and structural features to present viewpoint





Students often say they can't revise for English Language but they can.

Literally anything that is aimed at older students or adults, can be a revision resource:  
*Newspapers, random pages of novels, letters etc*

Read the text and pick out 4 pieces of information.

**Or**

Ask yourself, "How has the writer used language/structure to make the reader interested and engaged?"

**Or**

Use a picture as a stimulus for a descriptive or narrative piece lasting 45 mins (pictures are just a quick google away)





# Revision Help

Use the booklets from school and redo the papers.

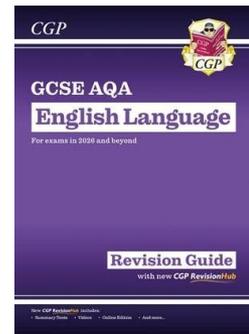
CGP do a detailed guide (new 2026)

Online Help:

[GCSE English Language - AQA - BBC Bitesize](#)

Mr. Bruff revision videos for new questions:

[Mr Bruff - YouTube](#)





# English Literature

## Two Papers

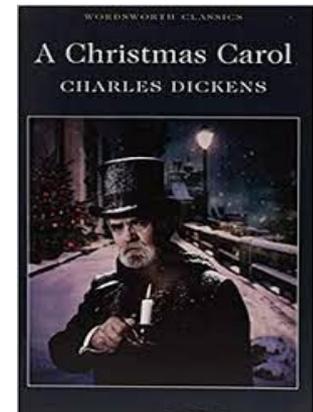
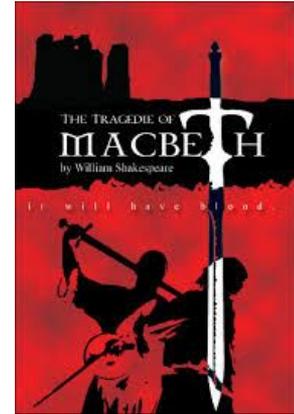
□ **Paper 1** 64 marks 1 hour 45 minutes

### Section A: Macbeth

**Compulsory question, using extract and knowledge of play.** 34 marks (4 of these are for SPAG)

### Section B: A Christmas Carol

**Compulsory question using extract and knowledge of novel.** 30 marks (SPAG not tested)





**Paper 2** 96 marks 2 hours 15 minutes

**Section A: Inspector Calls/Lord of the Flies**

**One question from choice of 2 (no extract)**

**34 marks (4 SPAG)**

**Section B: Love and Relationship Anthology**

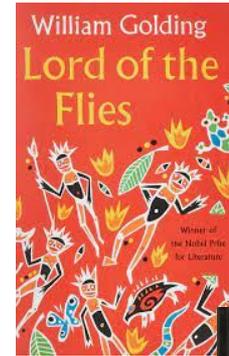
**Compare printed poem with one you remember**

**30 marks (no SPAG)**

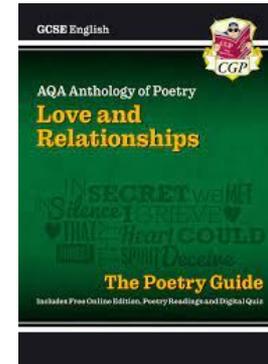
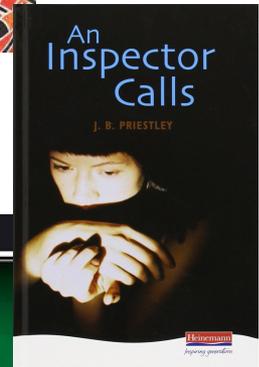
**Section C**

**Part 1: unseen poem essay 24 marks**

**Part 2: unseen poetry comparison 8 marks**



or





## Key Issues and Solutions

### ❑ Students not knowing/remembering the **WHOLE** texts well enough

Re-reading is key. Read and read again. Films can help but be wary with changes.

### ❑ Quotation learning

Key quotations all around the house. Bedroom, fridge door and toilet are prime locations. Look, cover, check – classic spelling test.

### ❑ Not transferring the analytical writing skills from the language paper

Reassuring themselves that they can and have already done it before.

### ❑ Not enough fluidity in linking context to analysis

Know the contextual information well. Must not include it all at the end of a paragraph as a bolt on. Being aware that they should be answering the exam question not simply ‘dumping’ all they can remember on the page.

### ❑ Shakespearean language (**Macbeth**)

Remember it is meant to be performed. Most of the issues, conversations he writes about could be happening today! Focus on what they do understand and read around it - knowing the plot and characters well will help.





# Revision Help

Use the booklets from school - answer exam questions.

**SNAP** Revision books by Collins

**CGP** also do a detailed guide

**Lightbulb** revision guides offer detailed essay style analysis

**Online Help:**

BBC Bitesize for all the literature texts

[Lord of the Flies - GCSE English Literature Revision - AQA - BBC Bitesize](#)

Mr. Bruff revision videos:

[Mr Bruff - YouTube](#)





# Concluding Thoughts

## Parents please:

- 1) Encourage your child to be revising. Help them to create a **revision timetable**. If they are a worrier, then make sure they are taking breaks in between revising.
- 2) Check home learning is being completed
- 3) Help to set up systems whereby revision is possible e.g. quotations around the house, pop quizzes each morning, seeing performances (live/cinema), online or book study guides
- 4) Help them to improve any perceived weaknesses eg punctuation - help with proofreading.
- 5) Encourage attendance at any offered revision sessions - use session 6

