

Before exams

- Good revision is active. Test yourself on key ideas and concepts. Say them aloud. Pretend you are teaching the topic to someone else. Get your mum or dad to test you.
- Make a list of the key words that will make you sound like an authority (eg in English Literature use the word “**suggests**” instead of saying “the poet **says**”).
- Use our study room which is available in every session throughout the exam period (in the Media Centre).
- Get in shape for exams. Get enough sleep. Eat slightly less. Bring water to keep your brain fresh.

In exams

- Listen to instructions.
- When you open the exam paper, don't start answering: instead look through the questions to calm your nerves and see how much you have to do. Get a feel for the paper.
- In your answer book label the first page “Rough notes”. Use this to write down any key ideas or words that you will need to refer to.
- Look at how many marks an answer has: give more time to questions that will earn you more marks.
- Answer all questions: don't leave any blank, even if you think you can't answer it.

Writing style

- Remember that your writing skills will be really important in many exams. Try to avoid using long sentences that are joined with “and” and “but”.
- Instead try to start and end paragraphs with short sentences (“The two poems are quite similar”).
- Use connectives that will take your writing to a higher level: “as, although, because, when, so, despite”. Example 1: “This sentence would get a grade C, but it's not that bad”. Example 2: “Although this sentence would get a grade A, it's not so different from the previous one”.
- In literature, use short quotations embedded in your normal sentence (one or two words) to show that you really know the text.
- In most writing avoid saying “I”. Keep it impersonal. Example 1: “I think the poem is old-fashioned because ...”. Example 2: “The poem is old-fashioned because ...”)