

The run-up to GCSE English

Here's why you're a C/D borderline student

In reading:

- You spot WHAT is happening in a text, but don't say enough about WHO it is by and for and HOW it has been written
- You don't comment enough on language (structure, sentences, words)
- You either don't use quotations or you use quotations that are too long

In writing:

- You write in sentences that read like you speak – a bit too long and too often with ideas joined by 'and' and 'but' or 'so'
- You use the first word that comes into your head rather than rejecting it and fishing around in your mind for a more precise or unusual one
- You aren't vivid enough: you don't help the reader to see, hear and smell the things you describe
- You use commas to join sentences (commas can only be used to separate items within sentences. Between sentences you need a full stop or semi-colon)
- You use certain words too often: 'I', 'was/were', 'it'
- You start too many sentences with 'There are / It was / I am'
- You are therefore a bit predictable

Moving to a B, or an A, or an A* means doing less of all of this and making your **reading** more closely linked to language and your **writing** less predictable. This isn't so difficult. Reading stuff – especially books, newspapers and magazines – will help a lot.

Good luck.

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