

Mr B's Essential Guide To Exam Success:

How to get an A* in English

- 1 A* writers are fluent, assured, confident and often quirky. They take risks in their writing.
- 2 Most importantly, A* writers use a **variety of simple and complex sentences**. Sentence variety is the key. They may start a paragraph with a short, simple sentence. They may use some sentences which coordinate ideas with “and”, “but” or “or”. They will also use complex sentences. But the key is variety – no single style dominates.
- 3 A* writers use **vocabulary** which is descriptive (but not too flowery), precise, visual and occasionally unexpected. They use simple, familiar words as well as more complex ones. Their writing helps us to see what they are describing or to understand the ideas they are explaining

This **is** A* writing:

Describe the room you are in.

This room is prison-like. It feels somehow as if I am trapped here, imprisoned, even though the window is open, the door ajar, and a breeze drifts in from outside. All the same it is a prison, a place where I am locked each evening until I've completed my homework. It ought to be a private place of enjoyable study; instead, sadly, with the exams looming, it's a place I loathe.

(= variety of sentences, variety of vocabulary)

This **isn't** A* writing:

Describe the room you are in.

The room is small and like a prison. I feel as if I am trapped here because of all the work I have to do before the exams. A window and door are open and there is a soft breeze but it still feels to me like a prison cell.

(= lack of variety of sentences and predictable vocabulary)