

English Language Papers 1 and 2



Preparing for Success

What the booklet includes?

- ✓ General tips and advice for succeeding in the exams and meeting your best potential
- ✓ Information on what to expect in the exam papers
- ✓ Tips and success criteria (based on the examiner's mark schemes) for each section of the papers
- ✓ Full practice papers

General Tips on Succeeding

It is a damaging myth that 'you can't revise for English'. The truth is, your success is largely dependent on what you put into your English in your personal study time, but the good news is, there is lots you can be doing to better your chances of success in the Language exams:



- ✓ Complete the practice papers in this booklet and assess yourself against the criteria provided for each section/question
- ✓ Develop reading routines, particularly for the following:
 - Novels
 - Broadsheet newspapers such as *The Guardian* or *The Independent*
 - Article from the 'Voices' or 'Opinion' sections of newspaper websites
 - Famous speeches
(<http://www.historyplace.com/speeches/previous.htm>)
 - Magazines
 - Biographies/autobiographies
- ✓ Practice analysing the opening of novels for language and structure
- ✓ Use flashcards to help you revise your features of language and structure
- ✓ Revise and master your SPG on websites such as GCSE Bitesize
(<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/zx3gr82/revision>)
- ✓ Practice writing story openings
- ✓ Practice describing images
- ✓ Practice writing opinion articles on different topics and issues that come up in the news

Paper 1 – Explorations in creative reading and writing

Brief

The paper is split into two sections (reading and writing). Section A will be based around a literary extract from the 19th to 21st century. The 4 questions will require a combination of reading skills, including the ability to interpret information, analyse the writer's language and structure, and evaluate a critical perspective given on the text. Section B is worth half the marks on the paper and will provide a choice of 2 creative writing tasks, both of which will be thematically linked to the text in section A.

Paper Length: 1hr and 45 minutes

What can I expect the 4 questions to be asking for and how can I try to succeed?

1. The first question will ask you to focus on a **small section of the text** and to **retrieve specific information** from it; this could include information about a character, place, group, event etc.

Tips for success

- ✓ Spend no more than 5 mins
- ✓ Ensure the information is retrieved from the section specified only
- ✓ Ensure the information related to the question
- ✓ Provide short and concise answers
- ✓ Use quotes or paraphrase

2. Again, the question will ask you to focus on a **different section of the extract** and analyse how the writer has used **language** to achieve specific effects, ideas or impressions.

Tips for success

- ✓ Remember, language refers to the writer's individual word, technique and sentence choices
- ✓ Spend no more than 10 mins
- ✓ Ensure your analysis is of the language used in the chosen section only
- ✓ Ensure your points and your analysis relate back to the question regularly
- ✓ Identify a range of language features which could include:

- key **parts of speech** (adjectives, adverbs etc.)
 - **literary devices** (similes, metaphors etc.)
 - **linguistic devices** (rhetorical questions, anaphora etc.)
 - aspects on the **style** or **tone** of language
 - **punctuation** use
 - **sentence structures.**
- ✓ Select smaller quotes so that you can say a lot about a little

3. This question will now ask you to focus on the **whole text** and this time you will be asked about the way the text is **structured** to achieve a particular effect.

Tips for success

- ✓ Remember, structure refers to the way the text develops
- ✓ Before answering, try splitting the text into sections
- ✓ Spend no more than 10 minutes
- ✓ Refer back regularly to the question
- ✓ Make evaluative comments about how each section develops and helps the writer to achieve their intended effects
- ✓ Try to focus on a combination of larger structural units (e.g. the shape of the whole text might end where it starts and be cyclical) and smaller ones based on specific sections (e.g. the opening of the text might be a plunge or analepsis).

4. This question will again ask you to focus on a specific section of the text, which is usually bigger than the sections referred to in questions 1 and 2. You will be given a critical perspective on the text and be asked to respond critically.

Tips for success

- ✓ It is easier to gain marks by finding reasons to agree with the viewpoint throughout
- ✓ Adopt a critical tone throughout
- ✓ Use evaluative words (partly / most importantly / mostly / wholly / notably / arguably / greatly / effectively / vividly / completely / probably / possibly / definitely)
- ✓ Spend no more than 20 mins
- ✓ Refer back regularly to the question
- ✓ Be sharp and appreciative about what methods the writer has used in achieving the effect stated in the viewpoint
- ✓ Consider alternative explanations of your evidence (e.g. you might produce an alternative theory over the effect the writer was trying to achieve through a specific method)

Writing Question – You will have a choice of 2 tasks, the first of which is usually based on an image, the second of which usually asks you to develop a narrative with a specific theme, topic or event as your stimulus.

Tips for success

- ✓ Make it clear to the examiner which task you are attempting
- ✓ Spend 5 minutes planning your structure for effect
- ✓ Be ambitious with your vocabulary choices
- ✓ Be inventive and experimental with your use of language features
- ✓ Experiment with the way you start your sentences and ensure you are producing a variety of sentence types to suit the mood at certain moments
- ✓ Include a variety of punctuation
- ✓ Try to use punctuation for effect as well as for accuracy and control
- ✓ Allow at least 5 mins for proof reading (16 marks for SPaG is a lot)

FULL PRACTICE PAPER 1

Source A

This extract is from the opening of a novel by Richard Yates called 'Revolutionary Road'. In the extract, an amateur theatre company are at the end of a dress rehearsal.

The final dying sounds of their dress rehearsal left the Laurel Players with nothing to do but stand there, silent and helpless, blinking out over the footlights of an empty auditorium. They hardly dared to breathe as the short, solemn figure of their director emerged from the naked seats to join them on stage, as he pulled a stepladder raspily from the wings and climbed halfway up its rungs to turn and tell them, with several clearings of his throat, that they were a damned talented group of people and a wonderful group of people to work with.

"It hasn't been an easy job," he said, his glasses glinting soberly around the stage. "We've had a lot of problems here, and quite frankly I'd more or less resigned myself not to expect too much. Well, listen. Maybe this sounds corny, but something happened up here tonight. Sitting out there tonight I suddenly knew, deep down, that you were all putting your hearts into your work for the first time." He let the fingers of one hand splay out across the pocket of his shirt to show what a simple, physical thing the heart was; then he made the same hand into a fist, which he shook slowly and wordlessly in a long dramatic pause, closing one eye and allowing his moist lower lip to curl out in a grimace of triumph and pride. "Do that again tomorrow night," he said, "and we'll have one hell of a show."

They could have wept with relief. Instead, trembling, they cheered and laughed and shook hands and kissed one another, and somebody went out for a case of beer and they all sang songs around the auditorium piano until the time came to agree, unanimously, that they'd better knock it off and get a good night's sleep.

"See you tomorrow!" they called, as happy as children, and riding home under the moon they found they could roll down the windows of their cars and let the air in, with its health-giving smells of loam and young flowers. It was the first time many of the Laurel Players had allowed themselves to acknowledge the coming of spring.

The year was 1955 and the place was a part of western Connecticut where three swollen villages had lately been merged by a wide and clamorous highway called Route Twelve. The Laurel Players were an amateur company, but a costly and very serious one, carefully recruited from among the younger adults of all three towns, and this was to be their maiden production. All winter, gathering in one another's living rooms for excited talks about Ibsen and Shaw and O'Neill, and then for the show of hands in which a common-sense majority chose *The Petrified Forest*, and then for preliminary

casting, they had felt their dedication growing stronger every week. They might privately consider their director a funny little man (and he was, in a way: he seemed incapable of any but a very earnest manner of speaking, and would often conclude his remarks with a little shake of the head that caused his cheeks to wobble) but they liked and respected him, and they fully believed in most of the things he said. "Any play deserves the best that any actor has to give," he'd told them once, and another time: "Remember this. We're not just putting on a play here. We're establishing a community theater, and that's a pretty important thing to be doing."

Section A: Reading

Answer **all** the questions in this section.

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.

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1. Read the last paragraph of Source A.

List four things from this part of the text that we learn about The Laurel Players

(4 marks)

2. Look in detail again at this extract from paragraph 2 in the source.

"It hasn't been an easy job," he said, his glasses glinting soberly around the stage. "We've had a lot of problems here, and quite frankly I'd more or less resigned myself not to expect too much. Well, listen. Maybe this sounds corny, but something happened up here tonight. Sitting out there tonight I suddenly knew, deep down, that you were all putting your hearts into your work for the first time." He let the fingers of one hand splay out across the pocket of his shirt to show what a simple, physical thing the heart was; then he made the same hand into a fist, which he shook slowly and wordlessly in a long dramatic pause, closing one eye and allowing his moist lower lip to curl out in a grimace of triumph and pride. "Do that again tomorrow night," he said, "and we'll have one hell of a show."

How does the writer use language here to present the reaction of the director to the dress rehearsal?

You could include the writer's choice of:

- words and phrases
- language features and techniques
- sentence forms

(8 marks)

3. You now need to think about the **whole** of the **source**.

This text is from the opening of a novel.

How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader?

You could write about:

- what the writer focusses your attention on at the beginning
- how and why the writer changes this focus as the source develops
- any other structural features that interest you.

(8 marks)

4. Focus this part of your answer on the second part of the source, from paragraph 4 to the end.

It had been said that “this section effectively presents the emotional and physical commitment The Laurel Players have to their work in the community theatre.”

To what extent do you agree?

In your response you could:

- write about your own impressions of The Laurel Players
- evaluate how the writer has created these impressions
- support your opinions with references to the text.

(20 marks)

Section B: Writing

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.

Write in full sentences.

You are reminded of the need to plan your answer.

You should leave enough time to check your work at the end.

Either:

5. Write a description suggested by this picture:



Or:

6. Write the opening part of a story about a performance.

(24 marks for content and organisation
16 marks for technical accuracy)
(40 marks)