



Tuesday 20 December 2011

Dear Parent

## Re: English Language GCSE examination - final preparations

The English Language GCSE examination is fast approaching and it has been pleasing to see many Year 11 students working hard towards improving their chances of success in this very important examination. The revision sessions which took place in the first week of December were well attended, and this is testament to the commitment and endeavour that many boys are demonstrating in preparation for their January GCSE exam.

On Monday 12 December, students sat a second English Language mock GCSE exam; students should have now received personalised feedback from this mock exam, so should be aware of how they performed in each section of the exam, and in each of the exam questions. During the Christmas break it is expected that students will reflect on their mock exam performance and utilise their exam revision and preparation time productively, in order to address any areas for improvement.

Whatever grade your son achieved in his mock exam, there is still plenty of time in which he can make significant improvements to his exam performance. The English Language GCSE exam is skills-based, therefore, the more practice that students can undertake in the form of past exam questions - and submit for marking and feedback during the holiday - the better grade they are likely to secure in the January exam. Each question on the exam paper - for both Foundation and Higher tiers - assesses for particular skills, so it is essential that students are acutely aware of the skills being assessed in each question. All of this information has been communicated to students during the past term and is also available on Fronter, the school's VLE to which all students have access, for reference. Detailed information on how to approach each exam question, and the specific skills being assessed in each question, was also distributed at the revision sessions that took place on Tuesday 6 December and Wednesday 7 December; again, this information is available on Fronter for reference - select 'AQA English Language Foundation/Higher Examination Guide' as appropriate.

A final revision session will take place on **Friday 6 January 2012** from 10.00 to 12.00 in the Lecture Theatre. This revision session will focus particularly on exam technique and how to maximise securing the 80 marks available in this paper. It is expected that students will make every effort to attend this final revision session in order to ensure that they are fully conversant with all of the best practice advice and guidance available for securing success in this very important examination. Uniform is not required.

It is to be hoped that students will take every opportunity during the Christmas break to hone their English Language GCSE skills by completing a number of past exam questions (available on the VLE and attached to this email), and submitting them for marking and feedback to [cleach1@challoner.kingston.sch.uk](mailto:cleach1@challoner.kingston.sch.uk). Any work submitted will be marked in accordance with the AQA mark scheme and should be returned, with relevant comment, within 3 days.

I hope this helps to clarify procedures and expectations for the remaining weeks until the English Language GCSE exam. Your continued support in respect of your son's English Language GCSE preparation is very much appreciated. As always, should you have any questions or require further information in relation to the above, please do not hesitate to contact me ([cleach1@challoner.kingston.sch.uk](mailto:cleach1@challoner.kingston.sch.uk)).

Yours sincerely

Mrs C Leach  
Head of English

## GCSE English Language Section B - Shorter Writing Task: Writing to Inform, Explain or Describe – 16 marks (25 mins)

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1. **Inform** the examiner about what you are really like.
2. **Explain** what you intend to achieve in the next year and **explain** how you intend to achieve these things.
3. **Describe** the view from your bedroom window.
4. Your local council is planning to develop a Youth Centre in your area. Write a letter to the leader of the council. **Explain** why a Youth Centre is a good idea and give **information** about the facilities and events you would like to have.
5. Many people are interested in animals. Write an **informative** article on an animal or animals of your choice.
6. Teenagers are often criticised in newspapers. Write a letter to the editor of a national newspaper **explaining** why this is often unfair.
7. **Describe** your home.
8. Childhood memories can be very important. Choose one childhood memory. **Describe** the memory and **explain** its importance to you.
9. Choose something you are interested in and know about. Write about it in a way which will **inform** other people.
10. Think about a decision you, or someone close to you, has made that has changed your life or the lives of other people. **Explain** what the decision was and the changes it brought about.
11. Write **informatively** about a journey you have made and **describe** the things you saw on the way.
12. School students sometimes say they get bored in the long summer holidays. Write an article for a local newspaper **informing** students of the different things they could do to prevent boredom.
13. **Explain** what qualities you think a best friend should have and **explain**, giving examples, why you think this.
14. **Describe** yourself.
15. Change can be good, bad or a mixture of both. Write about a time in your life when you experienced change of some kind. **Describe** what happened and **explain** how you felt about the change.
16. Write a letter to a friend who moved away from your area three months ago. **Inform** him or her of the things that have been happening to you over the last three months.
17. **Explain** what you think is needed to build a good relationship between parents and teenage children and **explain** why you think this.
18. **Describe** the person or people you would most like to go on holiday with you and **explain** why you would like to share a holiday with them.
19. Write a letter to the governors of your school **informing** them of the changes you would like to be made in your school and the reasons for these changes.
20. **Explain** what your dreams and ambitions for the future are. **Explain**, also, how you could achieve them.
21. **Describe** a nightmare world.
22. Many young people have concerns about the world in which they live. Write **informatively** about one or more of your concerns and **explain** the reasons for them.
23. Write an **information** leaflet on an area you know well. You could include information on places to visit and things to do there.
24. Write a letter applying for a part-time job you would like. **Explain** why you would like the job and why you are the right person for it.
25. **Describe** a place that is special to you.
28. Write an article for a magazine of your choice in which you **inform** readers about a subject which gives you cause for concern.
29. If you could choose, where would you most like to live? **Explain** the reasons for your choice.
30. Write a letter to your headteacher **explaining** how to improve your school.
31. Write a brief article for a website of your choice telling your readers about an interesting or unusual journey or travel experience you have had. **Explain** why it was memorable.
32. A place can appear to be very different if you visit it at different times of year. Choose a place that you know well and **describe** it at two different times of year for a travel website.
33. Sometimes difficult decisions have to be made. **Describe** a decision that you, or someone you know, had to make and **explain** the consequences. Your piece will appear in the *Real Lives* section of your local newspaper.

## GCSE English Language Section B – Longer Writing Task: Writing to Argue or Persuade – 24 marks (35 mins)

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1. **Argue** for or against the idea that advertisements for sweets should be banned from TV.
2. Write a letter to a TV company **persuading** them that they should produce more interesting programmes for teenagers.
3. Write an article for a magazine in which you present an **argument** for or against something you feel strongly about.
4. Write a letter **persuading** a publisher to produce a new and different magazine for teenagers.
5. A student you know is about to be excluded from school. Write a letter to the school governors **arguing** for or against this exclusion.
6. 'Students should not be allowed to bring mobile phones to school'. Write an article for a school newspaper in which you **argue** for or against this view.
7. Write an article for a teenage magazine in which you **persuade** the readers **not** to smoke.
8. Write a letter to a magazine called *The Explorer* **arguing** for or against expeditions to dangerous places.
9. A group of students from your school or college wants to go on an adventure trip abroad. Write the text of a speech to local business people **persuading** them to sponsor the group.
10. Write an article for a magazine for teenagers, **arguing** that global warming will affect their lives and **persuading** them to join a group which aims to protect the environment.
11. "People should spend less money on bottled water and fizzy drinks and give more to charity." **Argue** for or against this view.
12. Write a letter to a celebrity of your choice **persuading** him or her to support a campaign to end world poverty.
13. Write an article for a teenage magazine **arguing** that schools should change to give Year 11 students more freedom.
14. Write an article for a magazine aimed at teenagers in which you **argue** that students should be taught to drive at school.
15. Write the text for a car advertisement aimed at young men, which **persuades** them to buy the car.
16. Write the text for a local radio programme on physical fitness to **persuade** people to get fitter.
17. 'Young people nowadays don't know what real music is!' Write an article for a national newspaper where you **argue** for or against this point of view.
18. You want to take two weeks off school to take part in a televised talent contest. Write a letter **persuading** your headteacher to allow you to do this.
19. Write a letter to the organisers of the National Lottery in which you **argue** that more should be done to help young people with special talents and **persuade** the organisers that money should be given for this.
20. Write a letter to a headteacher **persuading** him/her that all students should take part in at least one hour's physical activity every day at school.
21. Write the text for a leaflet to **persuade** young people in your area to take part in a sponsored event for charity.
22. Your school or college is inviting entries for a writing competition. The topic is "Dangerous sports activities and pastimes are selfish, often put others at risk and should be discouraged." Write your entry **arguing** for or against this view.
23. Choose an activity or hobby that you are interested in. Write an article for your school magazine **persuading** other students to try it.
24. Many people believe that it is our duty to cut back on our use of the world's resources, and that we must invest in greener forms of energy for the future – whatever the cost. Write an article for an environmental website which **argues** for or against this idea.