

## Shell Form Revision Advice – ENGLISH Paper - 1 hour

Section 1 – Reading: 30 minute comprehension & analysis

Section 2 – Writing: 30 minute writing to *Inform: Explain: Describe*

### Section One - Reading

- Spend 5 minutes reading the text and questions very thoroughly.
- Spend longer on questions that offer more marks.  
(E.g. Make 3 well-developed points for a 3-mark question, **explaining your reasoning**).
- Some questions will ask for ‘evidence’ or tell you to ‘refer in detail to words and phrases’. In these answers, give a quotation from the extract and then explore the effectiveness of it.  
(remember to follow the structure of **PEE** = **P**oint, **E**vidence, **E**xplain)  
Keep quotations short, maybe just one or two words. Put inverted commas around the word or phrase.
- Write about *the effectiveness* of language, rather than just pointing out similes, metaphors etc.  
Comment on how they reveal more about a character, place or atmosphere.
- Revise definitions you have learnt this year – terms that describe language, such as simile, metaphor, and personification.
- **Similes** are comparisons that show how two things that are not alike in most ways are similar in one important way. Similes are a way to describe something. Authors use them to make their writing more interesting or entertaining. Similes use the words “as” or “like” to make the connection between the two things that are being compared. E.g. Playing chess with Ashley is **like** trying to outsmart a computer.
- **Metaphors** are comparisons that show how two things that are not alike in most ways are similar in one important way. Metaphors are a way of describing something. Authors use them to make their writing more interesting or entertaining. Unlike similes that use the words “as” or “like” to make a comparison, metaphors state that something **is** something else. E.g. Peter had the voice of an angel.
- **Personification** is giving human qualities to something that is not human. You can personify objects (e.g. the stars winked at me) or concepts (e.g. time waits for no man).

## **Section Two - Writing**

The writing task will ask you to **Inform: Explain: Describe**

**Before you put pen to paper, you should**

### **1. Think about your purpose.**

You will be writing to provide your reader with **information**. It may be factual, and you will need to give a clear and detailed **explanation**. It may be a powerful **description** about an event, person, place, object or incident. Again, you will need to use detail in your writing.

### **2. Think about your audience.**

Are you writing to friends, the Headmaster, a national newspaper?  
Should your writing therefore be formal or informal?  
NEVER use slang in exam writing.

### **3. Think about the format – how to set the writing out.**

You could be asked to write a letter, the words of a speech, a descriptive passage in a novel, or a magazine or newspaper article.

A newspaper article may be divided into columns and will need a suitable headline.

There is a sheet in this pack to remind you how to set out a formal letter.

You will never need to add illustrations to an examined writing task.

### **4. Plan carefully.**

Use one of the **planning sheets** over the page to help you order your points logically, before you start writing.

Remember that you will need to use paragraphs.

## Language Features of Writing to Inform: Explain: Describe

- The writing must clearly tell your reader something and be interesting enough to hold their attention.
- Explain and justify your points by using careful explanation and examples
- If you are describing a place or person, use the five senses; sights, sounds, smells, touch, taste
- Describe through comparison. Use similes and metaphors and perhaps personification
- Use vivid descriptive vocabulary – choose words precisely and be prepared to use unusual words, rather than clichés (overused phrases)
- Use *some* adjectives and adverbs, but don't over-use them, as it slows your writing down.
- Use dynamic verbs to keep your writing lively. E.g. Instead of writing 'James walked into the room' try 'James *sprinted*' or 'James *crawled*'.
- Give aural description too. Describe what your characters can hear. Use onomatopoeia (words that sound like the thing they are describing) When describing a person, give them dialogue to characterise them.

## Practice Writing Tasks

- Produce the blurb for a music CD or tracks from iTunes to inform the purchaser about the band and their music.
- Write the opening page of a prospectus for your school, to give new pupils an 'inside view' to help them in their first few weeks.
- Write a letter to your pen pal explaining what your hobby or special interest involves.
- Write a description of your encounter with a monster. Focus on quality of description, not plot.
- Write the opening to a ghost story, giving a strong, vivid description of the setting.

**This website contains useful revision tasks and advice:**

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/ks3bitesize/english/writing/inform\\_intro.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/ks3bitesize/english/writing/inform_intro.shtml)

- **What is the purpose of this letter?**
- **Who is the intended audience?**
- **Is it formal or informal?**
- **What features of writing to Inform, Explain, Describe can you identify?**

Newtown High School  
Newlands Road  
NEWTOWN  
NN1 1NN  
12 October 2008

Dear Parent/Guardian

Visit to Newtown Outdoor Pursuits Centre

We are planning to take all Year 9 students on a visit to Newtown Outdoor Pursuits Centre on Thursday 10 December. We shall leave school immediately after registration in the morning, and we intend to be back at the main school entrance by 7 o'clock in the evening. We shall be travelling by Brown's Executive Coaches. If our return is delayed for any reason, you may contact the company for information on 01234-567890.

Six teachers will accompany the students, who will be in groups of no more than ten throughout the day, always with at least one adult.

Your son/daughter will need to bring a packed lunch and sufficient drinks for an energetic day! No spending money is necessary, as there are no shops at the Centre. Students should wear comfortable old clothes that will not be damaged by water or mud; any specialist equipment will be provided by the Centre.

Newtown Outdoor Pursuits Centre offers a range of adventurous activities such as rock-climbing, abseiling, orienteering and canoeing. They are all supervised by fully-trained centre staff. We have arranged this visit to help our students develop skills of teamwork and of supporting each other in challenging situations.

We hope that you will agree to your son/daughter taking part in this day. If so, will you please sign and return the slip at the bottom of this letter with a donation of £10 (cash, or cheques made payable to 'Newtown High School Fund') to cover the cost of travel and use of facilities at the Centre.

Please contact me at the school if you wish to know any more about this visit.

Yours sincerely,

M Jones (Headteacher)