

Fourth Form Revision Advice – ENGLISH Paper - 2 hours

Section 1 – Reading: 40 minute analysis of a non-fiction article

Section 2 – Reading: 40 minute analysis of a prose extract

Section 3 - Writing: 40 minute writing to *Inform: Explain: Describe*

Section One – Reading a Non-Fiction Article

- Spend 5 minutes reading the text and questions very thoroughly.
- Pay close attention to the number of marks available for each question.
 - Make three well-developed points for a 3-mark question, **briefly explaining your reasoning**.
 - A 10-mark question requires a longer response, around a side of A4. You need to spend around 15-20 minutes on such a question.
 - Longer answers are really mini-essays. They need proper **planning** and need to be **structured**; follow the bullet points given to you in the question to plan and divide your ideas into paragraphs.
- In longer tasks, you will always be asked to **analyse the effectiveness of language**. You will be asked a question such as:
 - How does the writer try to communicate his message to the reader?
 - How does the writer persuade us of her point of view?

You should 'refer in detail to words and phrases'. Remember to follow the structure of **PEE = Point, Evidence, Explain**

Keep quotations short, maybe just one or two words. Put inverted commas around the word or phrase. Analyse the effect of these words and phrases.

Ask yourself **who** the intended audience of this article is and **what is the purpose of the writing?**

E.g. Is it to inform? Persuade? Advise?

If the article is designed to **persuade** the reader of something, are case studies, statistics and quotations from the 'experts' used to justify a point of view?

Section Two – Reading a Prose Extract

You will be given an extract from a novel or short story to read and analyse. The piece will be fictional, linked thematically to the non-fiction article.

- Again, spend 5 minutes reading the text and questions very thoroughly.
- Pay close attention to the number of marks available for each question.
 - E.g. Make three well-developed points for a 3-mark question, **briefly explaining your reasoning**.
 - A 15-mark question would require around 1 ½ sides of A4 and you need to spend 25-30 minutes completing it.
 - Again, the examiner is expecting a mini-essay. These need proper **planning** and need to be **structured**; follow the bullet points given to you in the question to plan and divide your ideas into paragraphs.
- In longer tasks, you will always be asked to **analyse the effectiveness of language**.
You should 'refer in detail to words and phrases'. Remember to follow the structure of **PEE = Point, Evidence, Explain**
Keep quotations short, maybe just one or two words. Put inverted commas around the word or phrase. You will be asked a question such as:
 - How does the writer use language to create an atmosphere of fear / suspense / excitement / happiness?
 - How is a particular character depicted?
 - How does the writer use language to build tension?
 - What emotions is the writer trying to arouse in the reader?
- Look for examples of metaphorical language
- **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 the technique of 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).
- Look for the way a writer uses language to create particular sounds.
- **Alliteration** is repetition of a consonant across a section of prose or lines of poetry. It can create a harsh (z, t, k), or soft (l, m, f) sound, depending on the consonant chosen, which contributes to the tone and atmosphere created in the writing.
- **Sibilance** is repetition of s or the sh to create a sound that can either be gentle and murmuring, (like the sea) or missing and menacing (like Harry Potter’s Parseltongue).
- **Onomatopoeia** is using words that imitate the sound they denote. Onomatopoeia can be used simply, in writing for children or for simple humour. E.g. *Baa Baa Black Sheep*. However, the effect can be more subtle and powerful. For example, in Sir Alfred Tennyson's poem 'Come Down, O Maid', *m* and *n* sounds produce an atmosphere of murmuring insects: “*the moan of doves in immemorial elms, And murmuring of innumerable bees.*”

Section Three - 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

- **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?**

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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)