

CML/jwn

12 December 2017

Dear Parent/Guardian

Re: Trial Examination information - English

Your son is currently working towards two English GCSEs: English Literature and English Language. Since September, he has been working through both English Language Paper 1 and English Literature Paper 1 and he will sit both of these papers as part of the trial examinations in January.

The English Language examination will focus on reading and writing skills linked to an unseen prose extract. The English Literature examination will focus on the two texts studied in the autumn term: 'MacBeth' and 'A Christmas Carol'.

The English trial examinations will be held during the first week back after Christmas; as such, it is imperative that your son revises for both papers over the Christmas break. The guidance offered below is intended to support him in revising and should be used in addition to any home learning or revision tasks set by his English teachers.

English Literature

Your son needs to spend time re-reading the set texts. He should also be memorising quotations for key characters and themes e.g. power in 'MacBeth' or social responsibility in 'A Christmas Carol'. Learning a selection of quotations for both texts is extremely important as all English Literature examinations are closed book, so he will not be able to take copies of the texts into the exam with him.

Your son might prefer to listen to audio copies of 'MacBeth' and 'A Christmas Carol', both of which are available on YouTube. Film adaptations of the text are also available online; he is welcome to watch these but he needs to be aware that these adaptations are not always true to the text. They should not be used as a substitute for reading the text through.

In addition to re-reading the texts and his class notes, your son may also find it beneficial to use revision materials and guides. CGP Books offers some fantastic guides and these can be ordered directly from their website or local bookshops. Online revision materials are also available from websites such as BBC GCSE Bitesize, Sparknotes and No Fear Shakespeare. The English Team also recommend the video tutorials on Mr Bruff's YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/user/mrbruff/featured).

English Language

Many of the reading questions on this paper require students to use subject-specific terminology. Your son should spend time revising this terminology; he will be able to use his exercise book to support him in this revision.

In addition to this, your son may choose to complete a mock exam paper before the end of this term in order to practise key skills. A paper for him to work through can be found on the VLE under English>GCSE>English Language> Paper 1> Trial Exam Preparation. However, he needs to be aware that unless this is submitted in time for his teacher to mark it before the end of term, feedback will be limited.

As with English Literature, we recommend Mr Bruff's YouTube channel. There are also revision guides and workbooks available from CGP Books.

In the lead up to the trial examinations in January and the real examinations in the summer term, it is important that your son reads widely. Not only will this increase his ability to handle longer texts – the texts in the examinations will be between 500-700 words long – but it will allow him to learn new vocabulary. He would be best advised to read a mixture of fiction and non-fiction, including news articles from The Guardian or BBC News.

I hope that this information is of use to both you and your son. Should you have any queries regarding the trial examinations, please contact the school.

Yours sincerely



Miss R. Walters
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