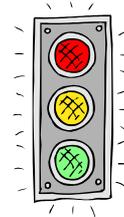




Teaching Approaches to Revision

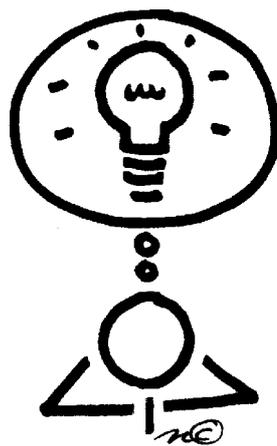
Generic Classroom Activities

1. Brainstorm and create a bank of possible exam questions on a given text / collection of poems.
2. Direct students to traffic light code each of these questions according to how confidently they think they could answer them - green for confidently, orange for quite confident and red for not confident. Discuss how to prioritise these i.e. tackle orange coded topics first!
3. Teacher modelling of planning and note-making in different forms e.g. flow chart, mind map, transferring notes onto cards.
4. Students plan answers to questions they devised - this could be done independently, in pairs or by allocating a question to a small group. Students can then share their ideas with others, receive feedback and collaboratively produce a 'red hot' plan.
5. Teacher modelling of how to write an introduction or conclusion.
6. Students write their own introductions and conclusions - this is a good plenary exercise.
7. Card sorts with the grade descriptors followed by assessment of exemplar essays.
8. Students write practice essays, or parts of, to a given plan under timed conditions.
9. Allocate groups of students a theme / image / character / key passage on which to base a presentation for the rest of the class - this could involve the use of power point or the OHP.
10. Students create display work on a given theme / character etc.
11. Talk - allow students the opportunity to discuss a topic in a structured way i.e. straight forward time-limited tasks which engage students. E.g 'Just a Minute' - students have to talk on a given subject for one minute without hesitation, repetition or deviation! A great starter or plenary!



12. Loop card games on a novel / play / character / key passage - get students to devise their own if they are familiar with the concept of these cards!

13. Quick fire Q&A quizzes as a starter or plenary. Or, TV based quizzes e.g. Blockbusters, Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?
14. Students generate key word banks for a theme / character.
15. Teacher models how to use the PEE formula for writing about texts, how to set out quotations, how to use technical vocabulary etc.
16. Students select key quotations for a character / theme.
17. Students generate sentence starters for writing about a text.
18. Teacher modelling of revision techniques that cater for different learning styles e.g. summarising information into key points, brainstorming, explaining to someone else, tension graphs. Also, guidance on how to use revision guides, either 'in-house' ones or commercially produced ones.
19. Teacher modelling of how to highlight, annotate and use post-its effectively.
20. Teacher modelling of exam practice e.g. underlining key words, annotating, numbering paragraphs.





How can I usefully revise for English?



Ideas for Independent English Revision Activities

Tips for Revising Poetry

1. Write a summary of the key idea / meaning behind the poem. Reduce it to five words and then one word.
2. Identify two or three key quotations from the poem. Brainstorm ideas around each one. If you could only keep one line from the poem that best sums up its essence, which would it be?
3. Identify the techniques used by the poet to create meaning. List the technique (using appropriate terminology) and the effect on you as a reader.
4. Annotation - take a blank copy of the poem and annotate it again as a way of testing your knowledge and understanding. Refine your annotations - are they brief and useful? Remember that annotations should not be 'translations' of meaning but comments on ideas or effects but that they can be pictures and images as well as words.
5. If studying a cluster of poems, devise titles that convey the links between them. Support each title with key quotations from the poems to which it relates.
6. Create a table to chart the links between poems - subject / theme / structure / use of language
7. Brainstorm possible essay questions on the poem / cluster of poems.
8. Plan answers to essay questions - what are your key points and which quotations will you use?
9. Familiarise yourself with the marking criteria - highlight key points or boil down into bullet points / key words.
10. Essay writing - Write all or parts of practice essays (sometimes under timed conditions). Re-write essays you wrote in class, acting on the teacher's advice and subsequent revision in order to improve. Write the plans for essays you have already written. Write the introduction and conclusion of an essay. Assess your writing using the marking criteria.



How can I usefully revise for English?

Ideas for Independent English Revision Activities

Tips for Revising Drama

1. Quotation Quest - choose a key character from the play. Find a quotation that sums up what they think of another character in the play. Then find a quotation that sums up what this second character thinks of the main character. Repeat for any other characters in the play.
2. Quotation Quest 2 - Select two or three key quotations you could use when writing about a particular theme. Repeat for each theme. Consider colour-coding your text by highlighting quotations for each theme in a different colour.
3. Write a summary of each act of the play in no more than 50 words. Reduce each of these summaries to one sentence. Further reduce these sentence summaries to just one word for each act.
4. Produce a glossary of terms used when writing about plays e.g. soliloquy, dramatic irony. Find an example of each of these devices in the play you are studying and consider its function and the impact on the audience.
5. Take a blank copy of a speech or extract from the play you are studying. Annotate it to show your knowledge and understanding of a particular aspect e.g. relationship to other characters, use of language, directorial approaches, etc.
6. Produce a table to show how the main characters relate to the play's themes.
7. Produce a tension chart for a scene, act or the whole play. The x-axis (bottom) plots what and where it happens in the play. The y-axis plots how much tension it causes for either the character(s) or audience. You must be able to explain **fully** your reasons for these choices.



8. Brainstorm possible questions on the play (character, plot, language, theme, directorial etc).
9. Plan answers to possible questions. Write all or part of essay questions. Rewrite essays using your teacher's comments to make improvements. Assess your writing using the marking criteria and set yourself targets for revision.

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Ideas for Independent English Revision Activities

Tips for Revising Novels

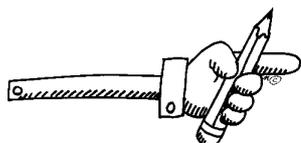
1. Identify 3-5 key sections or chapters of the text and study these closely. (You should try to reread the whole novel before the bulk of your revision begins). Reduce your notes to key points just before the exam - do this too early and you lose close textual knowledge.
2. Make brief event summaries in bullet points at the start of each new chapter or each key section. Flow charts can help here if you are a visual learner.
3. Prioritise the characters, themes and chapters that you think may feature in exam questions. Traffic light these and do not spend time on areas you are strong in already.
4. Build up a list of possible and past questions and plan out answers. Rehearse writing succinct and relevant introductions and conclusions that do not repeat the question. Brainstorm ideas with a partner to expand your points.
5. Build up a bank of useful vocabulary and quotations for each character and theme. Annotate your text using different colour codes. Write notes or symbols at the tops of pages to help you find references quickly and easily.
6. Ensure you can write about the style of the writer and have the right technical vocabulary to support your points. Ask your teacher for help with this if necessary.
7. Draw a timeline of events in the novel and /or a tension graph to plot the development of the main character. Try to write a short paragraph on how the novel has been structured.
8. Make a table of comparison between contrasting stories, characters or settings. This will help to generate ideas and force you to have an overview of the text.
9. Do not rely too heavily on revision guides - trust your own opinions if you can back them up. Be careful if watching a film or serialisation of the novel, as they are very seldom accurate to the text. An audiotape can be much more reliable.
10. Make sure you know how the essay will be marked and what the examiner will be rewarding. The wording of the question matters. Look at good essays by friends and see how they develop an argument.



How can I usefully revise for English?

Ideas for Independent English Revision Activities

Tips for Revising Literary Extracts



1. Try to identify key passages in your texts that could be chosen. Look at past questions and how marks are allocated. Work out how long you should spend on questions and how much detail is required.
2. Practise skimming and scanning passages the first time you read them in order to get the gist of what is going on. Use a highlighter when close reading a second time to help you identify the main points.
3. If the extract breaks up easily into sections then draw them in clearly and number them. This will make the passage easier to handle.
4. Build a key list of features to identify which could include: setting, narrative voice, characterisation and speech, imagery and descriptive detail, structure, techniques used in the building of tension e.g. repetition, syntax, vocabulary. Identify these on the passage using different colours or symbols. Then annotate with a few brief notes on what the effect is on the reader.
5. Practise your summary skills: give yourself a 50-word limit to explain where the extract comes from and what is happening.
6. Draw a mind-map of how themes in the extract relate to the rest of the text as a whole.
7. Make sure you can trace the development of a character throughout the whole novel. A flow chart could help you do this.
8. Read the passage aloud if possible, you may get a different impression of it.
9. Set questions on an extract for yourself. Remember that an extract will usually be taken from a key point in the development of a character or scene. Above all, questions will want to know about the effect of language on the reader.



How can I usefully revise for English?

Ideas for Independent English Revision Activities

Tips for Revising Non-Fiction Reading and Writing:

Reading:

1. Read a variety of non-fiction writing e.g. from books, newspapers, magazines, the internet. Test yourself on the form, audience and purpose of each piece.
2. Select a piece of non-fiction writing and annotate it to show the techniques used by the writer at word, sentence and text level.
3. Write a PEE paragraph to explain the writer's viewpoint in a non-fiction text you have chosen.
4. Select a piece of non-fiction writing and devise a sub heading that sums up what each paragraph is about. Create a flow diagram with these to show how the writing is structured.
5. Devise questions based on a non-fiction text you have chosen. Model your questions on the ones used in past papers. Then, answer them!



Writing:

1. Read examples of each of the non-fiction text types e.g. inform, advise, persuade. Write a list of the conventions of each. Make these lists more useful by adding an example e.g. Advice writing = modal verbs = 'You could ...' , 'You might want to...'. Persuasive writing = imperatives = 'Buy now!' , 'Complete the slip below to ...' .
2. Devise a writing task for each non-fiction writing triplet.
3. Plan each piece of writing, thinking carefully about arranging the content into an effective sequence of paragraphs.
4. Write the opening paragraph for each task. Annotate your opening to show the features of that type of writing you have used.
5. Assess your own writing against the marking criteria you have been given. Set yourself a target for improvement.



How can I usefully revise for English?

Ideas for Independent English Revision Activities

Tips for Revising Creative Writing

1. To add depth to your description and extend your vocabulary, focus on the senses. Decide on an object, person and place and brainstorm words to describe it using sight, sound, touch, taste and smell (if relevant). Use a thesaurus to come up with alternative words. Be careful not to 'overwrite' - keep description clear, simple and concrete. Often one or two details that suggest character and setting will be sufficient.
2. Find synonyms (alternative words) for common words such as said, nice, red, etc.
3. Brainstorm some of the key features of different genres of fiction e.g. detective, horror.
4. Write a series of openings to a story attempting to hook the reader. You could begin in the middle of the action or conversation, reflecting back on past events, etc. Tease the reader by dropping hints and suggestions. Afterwards, annotate your opening to show the devices you have used and the intended impact on the reader. If possible, give your opening to someone else to read - did they respond in the way you intended or does your writing need a bit of tweeking?
5. Using a 'Story Wheel' or picture stimulus, write a simple, elegant plan of a story. (You could use flowcharts, storyboards, paragraph grids or just jot down a list of scenes.) Make sure you have a direction in mind in order to avoid it rambling on but don't be afraid of changing direction if a better idea comes along. Share with someone else and adapt your plan in the light of their comments. (Option: If you have time you could write the story in timed conditions.)
6. Produce a bank of useful and different phrases to start sentences e.g. verb + ing, verb + ed (Laughing, she... or Startled, he...), prepositional phrases (At the end of the lane...), a subordinate clause (Although she was tired,...), adverbs (Carefully she...), similes (Like a train, she ran).
7. Write an opening or closing paragraph to a story and try to vary the length of the sentences. Balance the rhythm of short/long sentences. Use simple sentences for clarity and



impact. Use compound for flow. Use complex to add extra layers of meaning. Do you want to use questions to draw the reader into the narrative? Exclamations command attention! Remember to avoid clumsy, lengthy sentences.

8. Produce a list of different connectives that you could use in a piece of writing.
9. Remind yourself of the rules for writing direct speech. Test yourself by writing up a recent conversation you have had with a friend or teacher. Mark your work using the rules. Keep testing yourself until you get it right!
10. Experiment with narrative voice. Rewrite part of a story from a different narrative perspective: if it was originally written in the first person, rewrite it in the third, or, write a particular episode from the viewpoint of a different character. You could even change the form and write it as a diary entry or a set of letters. Compare the two versions. Analyse which is more effective and why.
11. Look at a piece of writing which makes use of a wide range of language techniques (ask your teacher for an example). Annotate and then either continue the extract or write a new extract reproducing the author's style.
12. Look at the marking criteria for creative writing. Highlighting the key points to remember. Mark a piece of your writing using these criteria and set yourself clear targets for improvement. Redraft the piece of work.
13. Improve an existing piece of your writing by:
 - rearranging sections e.g. could it begin at a different point?
 - adding in material, especially detail e.g. describe specific details of how someone looks, etc. (You could use similes or metaphors.)
 - heightening and intensifying the language e.g. using more powerful and informative verbs or adjectives such as 'shuffled' instead of 'walked'.
 - taking out overwriting and padding - don't waffle!
 - varying sentences by making them shorter to create impact or tension, extending then by adding clauses and re-ordering by beginning, for instance, by using a verb + ing

