

Post 16 English Student Checklist for Success: English Language

	Task	Why Should I?	Tips
1	ENGAGE Ask and answer questions, join discussions, offer opinions...	Students who ask the questions they need to get answers specific to their learning. Essays are written discussions of a topic so practising putting your thoughts into words will support exam answers. English essays require supported opinions - develop them in class by defending your position and incorporating opinions of others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get in early - speak in the first 15 minutes of a lesson. ● Plan questions in advance. ● Don't be afraid to get it wrong. ● Have an opinion.
2	MEET DEADLINES Hand in fully completed and high quality work on time	Getting timely feedback is essential to understand what you can already do and what you still need to improve. Marking is quicker and more accurate if teachers can work on whole class sets when they have planned to.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have set times for English homework. ● Set reminders on your phone. ● Get help before the deadline. ● Work with a partner in specific study periods.
3	AIM HIGH Push yourself by working on the 'Exceed your target' tasks set by your teacher	By trying more complex tasks you will be exercising your subject knowledge and skills more effectively as well as embedding the basics. You are more likely to get your target grade if you aim above it. This will probably mean you 'fail' more tasks along the way but this is where learning happens. The only grade that really matters is the final one: 'Fail again, fail better.' Samuel Beckett	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Embrace 'failure'. ● Plan extra time for more complex tasks. ● Work with a partner. ● Get help before the deadline.
4	PUT THE HOURS IN Complete all homework and then do 4 hours of independent study per week	English requires an enormous amount of knowledge: texts, contexts, theorists' views, genre conventions, technical terms but you get no marks for gathering all this knowledge (so unfair). Your grades come from your ability to apply this learning. In class we need to focus on skills and application - you need to make sure the knowledge is there to apply and use this time to practise the skills you need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have specific times and tasks planned in advance each week then stick to them. ● Don't just re-read texts or notes - improve them, condense them, re-organise them... ● Keep your work organised as you go along.
5	APPLY FEEDBACK Use teacher comments to improve knowledge and skills	Marked work will give you a snapshot of your current achievement but, more importantly, will give you specific things to do differently next time. You must consciously try to do this next time you have a similar task. This meaningful practise will develop skills and knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understand the mark scheme for the question. ● Put teacher comments into your own words. ● Purple pen ALL marked work (either in class or as part of independent study) see task 13. ● Set yourself a target for each AO for the next time you do this task.
6	ATTEND ALL LESSONS Keep attendance at 97% or above	Low attendance is clearly linked with lower attainment. You need the content but also the skills practise that lessons provide. Don't skip - work will take twice as long as the lesson would and you will get half the value (as you will miss the discussion and the chance to ask questions).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● For unavoidable events - get work in advance and borrow class notes after the lesson. ● Look after yourself - eat properly, sleep well, don't drink too much - you know the drill.
7	RE-READ Unseen texts need to be read (easy) and understood (difficult)	You will need to read each unseen text 3 times (at least): Reading 1 - general understanding - annotate for content, tone, attitude, purpose, genre. Reading 2 - detailed understanding to enable plan - identify key quotes within each framework; do close analysis of key quotes: making links between overview (reading 1) and how text is constructed; develop opinions based on theorists and context; apply conventions of genre - is this typical? Reading 3 - as you write your analysis - have your opinions changed during the text? Why?; link key quotes together and to theorists and context; are elements typical of genre, context, producer? Will it work on receiver as intended?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build in time to practise re-reading unseen texts following the steps given (counts towards task 4). ● Little and often is best - spaced repetition is the key to long term memory development. ● Don't just re-read texts or notes on texts - improve them, condense them, re-organise them to force them into your long-term memory. ● Find your own texts to practise on - any written text can be analysed linguistically - use the frameworks as a guide to what to look at.
8	IMPROVE NOTES Add to class notes: terms, definitions, links, opinions, theorists, contextual	Working on improving your notes will embed the knowledge in your mind and help you develop the links and opinions between the text types, content and theorists. Your opinions on aspects of linguistics will begin to show original and perceptive ideas developed from this knowledge (level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Look up unknown or ambiguous words as you go. ● Work with a partner - compare notes, help each other. ● Plan a specific time each week to do this eg

	info	5 skill).	1 free and 1 evening (counts towards task 4).
9	DEVELOP WRITING STYLE Aim for precision and concision in your answers. Work on SPG too.	For higher level grades you will need a sophisticated writing style which uses technical terms and knowledge in an integrated and individual way. This needs practise. Examiners said this year that student handwriting is getting worse and that this causes problems for them. You should aim for clarity and accuracy of expressions every time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Give yourself a technical target for each task eg embed quotes fluently. ● Practise makes permanent so maintain high standards in everything you write. ● Read linguistic sources with an eye to their style as well as content.
10	TECHNICAL TERMS Learn the proper names for linguistic devices and use them accurately.	Technical terms demonstrate understanding of the mechanics of writing and reading (if you use them accurately). They allow a concise writing style because they are a shortcut to explaining the effect they produce. You will need a working knowledge of grammar, syntax and word classes. This is something you should practise and develop every week. Online there are MANY exercises you can do to help understand English grammar - google TEFL or EFL resources for introductory ideas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Keep a glossary of technical terms - add official definitions as well as your own, add examples as you find them (counts towards task 4). ● Annotate texts with terms AND effects, practise linking the two together. ● Compile a glossary which also contains the most common effects linked to each term (this will help with unseen texts).
11	BE INTERESTED Develop a wider understanding of language and literature.	Students who demonstrate independent thought and approach do better. You can develop this by being aware of the wider world of language. Read magazine / newspaper articles eg The Guardian (you will have to write an article in the exam); listen to podcasts such as Word of Mouth on Radio 4; read books eg David Crystal, Steven Pinker, Deborah Tannen; go online for university linguistic department websites, youtube clips of theorists discussing their work, collections of linguistic data, complete dictionaries with etymology, academic papers on specific theories, student forums etc etc etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage your family to join you in reading and discussing linguistic texts - you need to be aware of different views. ● Make time each month to explore something new. ● You have a textbook for this course - use it before lessons to prepare, during lessons to check understanding and afterwards to consolidate.
12	APPLY THEORIES AND CONTEXT Use these sources to develop your own views.	Just mentioning a theorist won't get you very far. You need to integrate their view into your argument. You can agree or disagree but you need to demonstrate how the information changed or confirmed your own view. Try starting a paragraph with this then showing how it conflicts with another theory or your own reading.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gather and organise theories and theorists as you go (counts towards task 4). ● Annotate texts with theories (and whether you agree or disagree). ● For contextual information try considering how different or similar the text would have been if written here/now or by someone else.
13	USE PURPLE PEN Try and improve all work by editing / re-writing in purple.	Revisiting marked work or class work with an eye to making improvements will help you hit your target next time. You will do some of this in class anyway but you should make a habit of this for every piece. Embedding this practise will also help when it comes to coursework and exam writing (where you will be editing as you go).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set a specific time each week to do this (counts towards task 4). ● Work with a partner. ● Date all work so you can see improvements over time. You can revisit purple work for revision too.
14	UNDERSTAND EXAMS Know what the question requires, which AOs apply and what the mark scheme demands.	Teachers will return marked work with a mark scheme attached. Taking time to understand what each level of the scheme means will help you hit your targets. Teachers will also share work which shows different levels of achievement - use these to assess your own work - are you better or worse? Is there a specific AO you need to focus on? What targets can you set to hit the next level? This kind of self-assessment makes you better at understanding how an exam answer is going and being strategic about how to finish/improve it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exam boards all have websites with past papers, marked student answers, mark scheme and other supporting documents - look at what you will be doing in the exam. ● Put the mark scheme into your own words to ensure you understand it. ● For each question type collect examples of answers. For each AO collect/record the kind of information/skill it requires. ● Practise planning answers which cover all relevant AOs.
15	KEEP GOING!	Resilience is a key skill for A Level study (and life). Students who see 'mistakes' as necessary to learning (rather than being sad or cross about them) do best. Remember: there are no naturally good English students, only those who put the hours in. It will pay off!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Don't get behind with reading or work - it will quickly feel overwhelming to catch up. ● Expect to improve with each successive task within a unit - don't expect to start a new unit at the same level. ● Ask for help when you need it. ● Revision is meant to be painful - focus on what you can't do...this will make exams painless (promise).

The amount of useful effort a student puts is the best indication of the result in English - you get the grade you deserve.
Use the information above to ensure you are doing the right things, in the right proportion, for the right amount of time.

Student Planning Sheet

What kind of tasks should you do for task 4?

When will you work on English each week? You need homework time, independent study time and reading time.

How much time will you need to budget for reading your set texts?

Which of the tasks above are you most excited by?

Why - is there anything about this task you can apply to the other (scarier) ones?

Which of the tasks above are you most worried about / scared of?

Why - what kind of planning will you need to do to sort this out? What kind of support will you need to succeed?

Course title:

Exam Board:

Exam Papers and Dates:

Coursework Deadlines:

Questions I still have: