

# INTRODUCTION TO AQA GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

## SKILLS NEEDED:

- Reading comprehension
- High vocabulary
- Inference
- Analysis
- Summary
- Comparison
- Evaluation
- Creative writing (persuasive + informative non fiction)

## HOW TO STUDY:

- Do what works for you
- It depends on your concentration levels, learning style, engagement
- Meet up in revision groups
- Learn independently
- Keep very organised notes - a revision book or folder is a good idea
- Condense your revision notes - highlight or write out anything that you forgot
- Take regular breaks
- Either work intensely for short periods, or go at a slow pace and take your time
- Understand and take on board feedback

## TOP GRADES:

- Understand and work with mark schemes
- Vocabulary List
- Systematic breakdown of exam questions / types
- Learn essay / analytical writing to a high standard (PEE paragraphs)
- Learn how to write a range of non fiction forms (blog, diary entry, article, opinion piece, speech, letter etc)
- Practise papers and get feedback (minimum 4 before you take your actual exam)

# AQA GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PAPER 2 - OVERVIEW

The key to understanding this paper is in the title: **PAPER 2: WRITERS' VIEWPOINTS AND PERSPECTIVES**. This means that it is focused on non-fiction writing (not stories) that provides strong opinions. Most of the writing you encounter in this paper will be persuasive, so make sure you are well trained in how to write effective persuasive pieces.

## ***Section A: Reading***

- You are given one non-fiction text and one literary non-fiction text
- Tests your comprehension skills (reading + understanding, including difficult vocabulary)
- Information selection skills (understanding the question and selecting the right quotations to prove your point)
- Analysis / Evaluation skills (explaining in detail how + why language works in a particular way, and tying that to how it achieves the overall purpose of the text)

## ***Section B: Writing***

- Writing to present a viewpoint > ARGUMENTATIVE / PERSUASIVE WRITING

Timing: 1hr 45 mins

- Practise timings before taking the real exam
- Complete mock papers / questions in accurately timed conditions + get your teachers or tutor to mark them + take on board feedback
- After noting down your feedback, try again and aim for a better grade each time you try. It's good to make a checklist for each question of things to remember to include, that way over time you'll train yourself to hit all the targets required for the mark scheme on each question.

Section A: Reading (40 marks) (25% of overall GCSE) – two linked texts

**Spend 55mins - 1hr on this section**

- Before you answer the questions, spend 10 mins reading through the texts thoroughly. Don't skip this stage or do it too fast, as you need to absorb the information and think about it properly before you begin writing.
- 1 short form question (1 x 4 marks) > 5 mins
- 2 longer form comparative and analysis questions (1 x 8, 1 x 12 marks) > 8-10 + 12-15 mins
- 1 extended question (1 x 16 marks) > 15 - 20 mins
- 5 mins reading through and checking your answers

Writing (40 marks) (25% of overall GCSE)

**Spend 45-50 mins on this section**

- 1 extended writing question (24 marks for content, 16 marks for technical accuracy)
- Understand all the keywords of the question before you start, make sure your answer is as targeted as possible towards the question.
- Plan your writing before you begin - take around 5 mins to plan, it doesn't need to be in great detail it can just be an overview of where you're going with the question. Make sure to identify your GAP (Genre, Audience, Purpose) as thoroughly as you can before starting to plan.
- Spend around 35-40 mins writing. Write using as complex vocabulary as you can, try to adapt your style to suit the GAP and use a huge range of language techniques and punctuation. This is a persuasive piece so rhetorical devices are especially important to use here. Semicolons and colons are considered high level pieces of punctuation, definitely learn how to use those and put them into this answer.

**NOTES FROM THE EXAM BOARD:**

The aim of this paper is to develop students' insights into how writers have particular viewpoints and perspectives on issues or themes that are important to the way we think and live our lives. It will encourage students to demonstrate their skills by:

- In section A, reading two linked sources from different time periods and genres in order to consider how each presents a perspective or viewpoint to influence the reader

- In section B, producing a written text to a specified audience, purpose and form in which they give their own perspective on the theme that has been introduced to them in section A.

The paper will assess in this sequence, AO1, AO2 and AO3 for reading, and AO5 and AO6 for writing. Section A will be allocated 40 marks, and section B will be allocated 40 marks to give an equal weighting to the reading and writing tasks.

### **Content**

The sources for the reading questions will be nonfiction and literary non-fiction texts. They will be drawn from the 19th century, and either the 20th or 21st century depending on the time period assessed in Paper 1 in each particular series. The combination selected will always provide students with an opportunity to consider viewpoints and perspectives over time. Choice of genre will include high quality journalism, articles, reports, essays, travel writing, accounts, sketches, letters, diaries, autobiography and biographical passages or other appropriate non-fiction and literary nonfiction forms.

In section B, there will be a single writing task related to the theme of section A. It will specify audience, purpose and form, and will use a range of opinions, statements and writing scenarios to provoke a response.