

Exam Revision and Top Tips – HIGHER

Before you do anything else:

- Remind yourself of the timings. Make a quick note of when the 1 hour mark will pass
- Spend 2-3 minutes skimming and scanning each of the non-fiction texts.
- **BEGIN WITH SECTION B! Do not leave questions 5 and 6 for the end!**
- I would also not recommend leaving question 4 for the end – Q1 can go last.
- Quickly skim through the answer booklet and read all 6 questions, so you know what you'll be asked before you start.

Section A: Reading

Question 1: Retrieval / inference (8 marks):

- Type of question: *What do we learn about... What reasons are given for... What are we told about...?*
- What the question wants you to do: Show you understand the main points in the article and can read between the lines where needed
- How to answer the question: GAP the text. Then: One point per mark; embed **short** quotes; **very brief** explanation/comment of what you've learned or why it's important to the article.
- Timing: 4 minutes reading, 10 minutes writing
- How to revise:
 - look at mock mark scheme for this question
 - find newspaper articles about events, travel, news, opinions etc, stick in your portfolio, write a question to answer and practise reading and identifying points in 5 minutes, writing in 10-12 minutes

Question 2: Presentation (8 marks):

- Type of question: *How does the headline, image etc contribute to the effectiveness of the text?*
- What the question wants you to do: Show you can identify presentational features (and language features if appropriate in the headline), and **link** them to the text
- How to answer the question: GAP the text. Then: At least one point per 2 marks; name the feature; describe (for images etc) or quote (for headlines) the feature; explain the effect of the feature, link to the text: i.e. PEE+L
- Timing: 5 minutes reading, 12 minutes writing
- How to revise:
 - Learn presentational devices
 - look at mock mark scheme for this question in your mock pack;
 - find articles with headlines and images, write a question to answer and practise reading and identifying points in 5 minutes, writing in 10-12 minutes

Question 3: Inference and Interpretation of Thoughts and Feelings (8 marks):

- Type of text: This will always be a piece of literary / quality non-fiction, e.g. autobiography, travel writing etc
- Type of question: Effect of text on the reader, e.g. *What are the writer's feelings about... and how are they conveyed?*
- What the question wants you to do: Show you can read between the lines and interpret underlying meanings in a text (what thoughts/feelings, why are they experienced, how are they conveyed).
- How to answer the question: GAP the text. Then: At least one point per 2 marks (i.e. at least 4 points in total – aim for at least 5 to allow for errors); Make a point, **short** quote to support it, explain effect on the reader (PEE+). Remember to read the question carefully and link points to **exactly** what it's asking.
- Timing: 5 minutes reading, 12 minutes writing
- How to revise:

- look at mock mark scheme for this question in your mock pack;
- find extracts from autobiographies or travel writing books, stick in portfolio, invent a question relating to the effect the text has on the reader or the feelings of the writer, practise reading and identifying points in 5 minutes, writing in 10-12 minutes

Question 4: Comparing language (16 marks):

- Type of question: Compare how language is used for effect in item 3 and one item of your choice
- What the question wants you to do: Show you can 'zoom in' on specific words / phrases / techniques and explain how they are used to suit purpose and audience. Show you can **compare** language use across 2 texts
- How to answer the question: GAP the text. Then: At least one **comparative** point per 4 marks (i.e. at least 4 **comparative** points in total – aim for at least 5 to allow for errors); name the language feature (or just say 'the writer uses the word...'); **short** quote showing the feature; explain the effect of the feature, link to the second text, PEE second text: i.e. PEELPEE
- Timing: 5 minutes re-reading for language features, 20 minutes writing
- How to revise:
 - Learn language and grammar devices
 - look at mock mark scheme for this question in your mock pack;
 - find 2 texts with good language features, write a question to answer and practise reading and identifying points in 5 minutes (10 minutes if you're looking at them for the first time), writing in 20 minutes

Section B: Writing

Question 5: the shorter question (16 marks):

- Type of question: Some combination of inform, explain and/or describe. Likely to be a slightly more personal or informal writing type than the next question
- How to answer the question: GAP the question. Plan a response, aiming for a brief introduction, 3 main sections and a conclusion or signing-off
- Timing: 5 minutes planning, 15-20 minutes writing, 3 minutes proof-reading
- How to revise:
 - look at your targets from mocks and other writing pieces;
 - learn the techniques for writing to *describe* in case this comes up;
 - practise planning

Question 6: the longer question (24 marks):

- Type of question: Writing to argue and/or persuade. Likely to be a slightly more formal writing type than the shorter question
- How to answer the question: GAP the question. Plan a response, using the 'master plan' for writing to persuade: introduction, point 1, point 2, attack, point 3, conclusion
- Timing: 5 minutes planning, 25 minutes writing, 5 minutes proof-reading
- How to revise:
 - learn to use a range of language techniques
 - practise using the techniques for different topics;
 - learn to plan and practise using it on topics of your choice;
 - look at your targets from mocks and previous practice do the mock question if you ran out of time in the exam