**A Revision Task a Day – National 5 and Higher Study Ideas**

When you are studying for English (as with any subject) you need to vary what you do and take breaks.

* Get organised. You know that folder full of bits of crumpled paper – time to go through it and organise what you need for studying
	+ Original texts and notes, quote sheets, essay plans, model essays, marked essays….
	+ Scottish text, notes and annotations, model papers, completed papers…
	+ Close Reading formulas to learn, advice sheets/notes, model answers and completed papers.
	+ Advice on, and examples of, critical writing….
* Give yourself 45 minutes to an hour 30 minutes before you break for 5 minutes. Make this time work for you – try a timed Close Reading, focus on prose questions to practise or reduce notes/quotes to keywords.

Studying can be effective in these shorter bursts. You don’t have to work harder and harder over the revision period **IF** there is full concentration on each task – no music and no technological devices!

* Listen to your gut – if you aren’t satisfied by your revision, if you don’t feel good about it have you done enough, have you challenged yourself? The bigger the effort now the better the payoff in terms of your final result.
* Don’t give up, however if you find yourself struggling or in difficulty. Use this as an opportunity to get better; if you fall into the trap of believing you can’t revise or you just aren’t any good at the subject you will fail. Success lies only within your control.
* Make up a study plan where you limit yourself to 2 subjects a day. Try to spend a whole morning or afternoon on English rather than an hour here and there.
* Use breaks wisely – phone a friend, make a coffee, listen to a couple of your favourite songs. DON’T turn on the TV – this is lethal.
* Vary how you study – don’t just sit staring at plans and notes. Get up and walk around. Speak out loud as if you’re teaching someone else, tape yourself, study with a friend and test each other, get parents to test you, time yourself, test yourself with a blank page
* Find a quiet place to study away from distractions
* Most importantly, make a note of questions you have about Close Reading questions that still baffle you or points in texts you still don’t understand and make sure you then ask your English teacher.

The ideas that follow form a study plan for English for the three weeks prior to the exam – your revision should start long before this. It includes ideas for both the essential parts of your studying – revision/memorising of key ideas and quotes AND practising.

**Day 1**

Revise your critical essay text - make a poster displaying all your points. Include the quotes you want to learn and post it in your room (or somewhere equally prominent around the house). Make it as colourful and visual as you can. Make sure you can say at least three things about each of your quotes!!! What is the key word? Or the technique/s used? What does it tell us about the character/s? How does it help us to understand the theme/s?

**Day 2**

Today's mission is to spend an hour revising your second critical essay text – if you have one. Make a poster displaying all your points and quotes and put it up somewhere prominent. Make sure you can say at least three things about each quote!

**Day 3**

Get revising for your Scottish text today. Try working on the key **themes**. For each theme, identify the 3 moments from the play/novel that convey that theme and explain the link.

Can you now list one quote and one motif/symbol/prop./setting that links with that theme? Make sure that you can explain the link to the theme clearly.

For poetry make links between the poems by each key theme – identify key quotes for analysis that convey theme

**Day 4**

Try a Close Reading today with your formulas and model answers from previous Close Readings beside you. Take your time, use a highlighter to help you ‘read’ the paper then make sure you identify the command words in the questions. Use the formula sheet (available on the Strathaven website) and model answers to help you write your answers.

Use the marking key to check your answers – improve your answers using a different coloured pen.

**Day 5**

Today test your knowledge of your critical essay text/s - get someone to test you on your paragraphs, points and quotes.

**Day 6**

Now try a timed close reading paper. Give yourself one hour to complete (N5) or one hour and a half (N6) - you can still use your formula sheet/model answers to help

**Day 7**

Read from a quality Sunday paper. Read and think about at least one article from the opinion/comment section.

* What is the purpose of this article? Who is it written for? What is the writer’s stance on this issue and what are the writer’s key points? What language techniques have they used to meet the purpose and the audience? Try using a highlighter to find effective examples of word choice, imagery and sentence structure. Can you analyse why they have been used?
* Articles of appropriate challenge can be found at sites such as:
	+ - [**http://www.theguardian.com/uk/commentisfree**](http://www.theguardian.com/uk/commentisfree)
		- [**http://www.theguardian.com/observer**](http://www.theguardian.com/observer)
		- [**http://www.heraldscotland.com/opinion/**](http://www.heraldscotland.com/opinion/)
		- [**http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/**](http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/)
		- [**http://www.independent.co.uk/voices**](http://www.independent.co.uk/voices)

You could use the N5/N6 Reading sheet – available in the homework section of the website - to help you set down your thoughts.

**Day 8**

Today, revise characters from your Scottish text and their relationships. Review your notes/ideas on character and any quotes about character/relationships and what they reveal. Pick out the key moments for each character/relationship and explain.

For poetry try picking 2 poems at random – you could use dice with each number representing a different poem. Your challenge is to find a way of linking the 2 poems – either by theme or idea or stance or technique. You should pick out 2 quotes you could use (one from each poem) that would enable you to prove this link.

**Day 9**

Try writing out your quotations for your critical essay text/s - from memory

Now write down the technique used in each quote

Now write down 2 or 3 things you could say about each quote (about the character, theme, setting…) – from memory.

Try to teach someone in your family about a couple of them!

**Day 10**

Back to your Scottish text today – revise the other techniques you have learned in relation to your text. For drama you might want to look at the staging. Can you write down all the lighting effects, the motifs and symbols and explain how and when they are used and what they suggest?

In short story/novel can you comment n the setting, the structure, the turning point, the use of symbolism…?

In poetry can you comment on the forms chosen by your poet – sonnets, dramatic monologues, free verse and why your poet has used these forms? Can you list the techniques that identify your poet’s style? In other words, what techniques are common to all 6 poems?

**Day 11**

Today's study suggestion is to prepare for critical essay. Get all your prose OR drama OR poetry Past Paper questions\* together, pick out 4 or 5 and try out the plan of attack for the exam for each one. This should take no more than an hour and a half at absolute maximum. For each one,
1. Read the question
2. Break it down into keywords and write them on some paper
3. Now brainstorm your answer using the keywords
4. Plan out 4 to8 key points that would really answer THAT particular question, from across the text – from the beginning, middle and end.
5. Identify which quotes you would use - can you write them down without looking?
6. Write a quick, simple introduction. Make sure you include: the words of the question, the text and author using our formula
7. Pick one of your quotes and try analysing it - say at least three things about it and make sure you link back to the question
8.Now do it again for another question

🟋 - Past Paper and sample questions are also available in the resources section of the website.

**Day 12**

Why not try a timed Scottish text paper today? Can you do it without notes...and in under 45 minutes?

**Day 13**

Today you should do the same task as you did on Day 11 but for your second critical essay text. If you don’t have a second text then try the same task but for a range of more challenging questions.

Break down the question, plan an answer, write an introduction, try analysing a quote or two - and try to combine this with a little memorising of your notes and quotes too.

**Day 14**

Revise your Scottish text notes today. Watch the videos and then test your knowledge using the multiple choice questions on the BBC site – <http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/levels/z6gw2hv> for National 5 or <http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/subjects/zqxhfg8> for Higher.

**Day 15**

Try a timed Close Reading paper today – without any model answers or formulas to help you.

**Day 16**

Get someone to test you on your weakest text today. Spend some time focusing on the points you are struggling to remember or the points you find most tricky. Team up with someone from your class or from another class who is doing the same text and work together to clarify the tricky points. Or try teaching them to an invisible class – this can be a great way of consolidating what you know and making your knowledge stick.

**Day 17 - 20**

With less than a week to go you should now be at the stage where you are testing yourself on what you have memorised so do a little of that each day

Try writing and planning a few essays or analysing a few quotes or building a paragraph around a quotation.

Try a Scottish text paper on your most feared poem or section of the play/novel

Read a quality broadsheet.

Don't work too hard the night before the exam - maybe get someone to test you on your quotes or practice spelling the words you always seem to get wrong.