

English Literature GCSE Non-Negotiable Knowledge.

*For each component of the English Literature exam these are the essential pieces of knowledge you **MUST** learn.*

- *This doesn't provide comprehensive revision.*
- *Developed revision still needs to be completed, this is a starting point.*

A Christmas Carol – The non-negotiables

When revising A Christmas Carol – these are the things we NEED to know:

The big 2 ideas	The big 5 events	The big 5 characters	The big 5 Quotations	Big 3 key contextual points
Social Responsibility	1. Introduction to Scrooge and the interaction with Marley ghost.	Scrooge	<i>'better they [die] and decrease the surplus population'</i>	Malthusian Theory and social division
Redemption	2. The Ghost of Christmas Past visits Fezziwig's generosity and Belle's breakup.	The Cratchits	<i>'I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the master-passion, Gain, engrosses you.'</i>	The Poor Law
	3. The Ghost of Christmas Present reveals the fate of Tiny Tim and Ignorance and Want.	The Ghosts	<i>'in the sight of heaven, you are more worthless and less fit to live than millions like this poor man's child.'</i>	The Child Labour Report and industrialisation.
	4. The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come shows Scrooge his miserable death.	Fred/Fezziwig/Belle	<i>'I fear you more than any spectre I have seen. But as I know your purpose is to do me good, and as I hope to live to be another man from what I was'</i>	
	5. Christmas morning: Scrooge's transformation and Redemption.	Ignorance and Want	<i>'Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim, who did NOT die, he was a second father.'</i>	

Macbeth – The non-negotiables

When revising Macbeth – these are the things we NEED to know:

The big 2 ideas	The big 5 events	The big 5 characters	The big 5 Quotations	Big 3 key contextual points
Ambition	1. The witches' prophecies state the Macbeth will be king. Macbeth is reluctant but LM persuades him to kill Duncan for the throne.	Macbeth	<i>'I have no spur. To prick the sides of my intent, but only. Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself. And falls on th'other.'</i>	The Great Chain of Being
The downfall of Macbeth	2. The aftermath of Duncan's murder and the Macbeth's growing guilt.	Lady Macbeth	<i>'Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood Clean from my hand?'</i>	The Gunpowder Plot and The Divine Right of Kings
	3. The murder of Banquo and Macbeth's guilt fueled madness.	The Witches	<i>'I am in blood / Stepped in so far, that, should I wade no more,...blood will have blood.'</i>	Women and Witchcraft.
	4. Macbeth returns to the witches and plots to strengthen his kingship by killing Macduff's family.	Banquo	<i>By the pricking of my thumbs, Something wicked this way comes.</i>	
	5. Lady Macbeth commits suicide and Macbeth is defeated by the English Army led by Malcolm and Macduff.	Macduff/ Malcolm	<i>Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player That struts and frets his hour upon the stage And then is heard no more. It is a tale/Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, Signifying nothing.</i>	

Animal Farm – The non-negotiables

When revising Animal Farm– these are the things we NEED to know:

The big 2 ideas	The big 5 events	The big 5 characters	The big 5 Quotations	Big 3 key contextual points
The Failure of the Revolution	1.Old Major's Speech and the Revolution	Napoleon	‘our lives are miserable, laborious, and short.’	The allegorisation of the Russian Revolution.
Power and Manipulation	2.The education of the animals and the Battle of the Cowshed.	Snowball	"It is for your sake that we drink the milk and eat those apples. Do you know what would happen if we pigs failed in our duty? Jones would come back!"	Orwell’s socialist views
	3.The expulsion of Snowball and Napoleon's reign of terror.	Boxer	"Silent and terrified, the animals crept back into the barn."	Education and Elitism
	4.The death of boxer.	Squealer	"Fools! Fools!" shouted Benjamin... „Fools! Do you not see what is written on the side of the van? They are taking Boxer to the knackers."	
	5. The cyclical nature of the novella. Life on the farm worsens and the pigs morph to men.	The humans (Farmers)	‘The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which.’	

Anthology Poetry – The non-negotiables *When revising Anthology Poetry – these are the things we NEED to know:*

The big 6 poems	3 big ideas	3 key quotations for each poem		3 key contextual points for each poem	3 comparative poems
Ozymandias	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The fragility of human power . The overriding power of time and nature. How control is corrupting. 	<p><i>-Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown, And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command</i></p> <p><i>"...My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings; Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!"</i></p> <p><i>-Round the decay/Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare/The lone and level sands stretch far away.</i></p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Shelley was a Romantic Poet- who believed in Man's inferiority to nature. Ramesses II was a cruel pharaoh King George III was a power-hungry king. 	<p>Storm on the Island. London. My Last Duchess.</p>
London	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> How those in power control individuals. The impact of power over society The attempt to control the natural world. 	<p><i>-in every face I meet/Marks of weakness, marks of woe.</i></p> <p><i>-In every voice: in every ban, The mind-forg'd manacles I hear</i></p> <p><i>-Blasts the new-born Infants tear/ And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse</i></p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Blake was a Romantic poet – who believed that Man was suppressed in cities. London's industrialisation led to poverty and squalor. King George III was a power-hungry king. 	<p>Charge of the Light Brigade. Kamikaze. Ozymandias.</p>
Kamikaze/ Poppies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The impact of conflict on families. The power of loss How brainwashing controls people 	<p>'a shaven head full of powerful incantation'</p> <p>'...remembered how he and his brothers witing on the shore'</p> <p>'was no longer the father we loved.'</p>	<p>'...steeled the softening of my face'</p> <p>'...the world overflowing like a treasure chest'</p> <p>'...hoping to hear your playground voice catching on the wind'</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Garland/Weir, as mother wanted to talk about how conflict impacts families. Kamikaze pilots were Japanese suicide bombers sent to bomb Pearl Harbour. Poppies are a symbol of war remembrance. 	<p>London. Checking Out Me History. Remains</p>
The Prelude	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Nature as a fascinating and alluring force. The overwhelming power of nature. Man's futile attempts to control nature. 	<p>'it was an act of stealth/And troubled pleasure...'</p> <p>'the horizon's bound, a huge peak, black and huge...upreared its head.'</p> <p>'huge and mighty forms...moved slowly through the mind ...and were a trouble to my dreams.'</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Wordsworth was a Romantic Poet- who believed in Man's inferiority to nature. He lived in the lake district. He believed in the sublime force of nature to overwhelm us. 	<p>Storm on the Island. Ozymandias. Exposure</p>
Exposure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The futility of conflict(war) Nature is more powerful and destructive than any weaponry. The tragedy of dying away from your homeland. 	<p>'...in the merciless iced winds that knife us...'</p> <p>'Pale flakes with fingering stealth come feeling for our faces—We cringe in holes, back on forgotten dreams...'</p> <p>'Pause over half-known faces. All their eyes are ice,/But nothing happens...'</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Owen was a soldier in WW1 The conditions in the Trenches killed more men than actual warfare. The propaganda of WW1 led men to believe they were fighting for king and country. 	<p>Bayonet Charge. Charge of the Light Brigade. Storm on the Island.</p>
Remains/ War Photographer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The trauma experienced by those who experience brutal conflict first hand. When people return home from conflict who cares. The feeling of guilt and futility experiences by people who have been in war. 	<p>'...one of them legs it up the road, probably armed, possibly not.'</p> <p>'And the drink and the drugs won't flush him out '</p> <p>'his bloody life in my bloody hands'</p>	<p>'spools of suffering set out in ordered rows'</p> <p>'.. how the blood stained into foreign dust.'</p> <p>'he earns his living and they do not care.'</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Duffy and Armitage both interviewed people who had experienced conflict first-hand. Modern conflicts don't impact real life in Britain. Armitage and Duffy are/were Poet Laurette. 	<p>Poppies Kamikaze Exposure</p>

English Language GCSE

Non-Negotiable strategies .

*For each component of the English Language exam these are the essential strategies you **MUST** learn.*

- *This doesn't provide comprehensive revision.*
- *Developed revision still needs to be completed, this is a starting point.*

Language Paper 1 – The non-negotiables

When revising Language Paper 1 – these are the things we NEED to know:

Question summary	Exemplar Question	Sentence stems
<p>Question 1 : This is a multiple-choice format divided into four sub-questions. (4 marks)</p>		
<p>Question 2 : Language analysis. You must explain how the writer uses words, phrases, and language features to create effects. (8 marks)</p>	<p>How does the writer use language here to describe the hyena's appearance? You could include the writer's choice of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • words and phrases • language features and techniques • sentence forms 	<p>The writer describes ... as ... ' _____ ' the word ' _____ ' shows _____ because it has connotations of... This could also suggest ... This might make the reader feel/learn/understand _____ because ...</p>
<p>Question 3 : Structure analysis. While previously about general interest, the 2026 format focuses on a specific single effect (e.g., tension or sympathy) created through structural shifts. (8 marks)</p>	<p>How has the writer structured the text to create tension? You could write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how tension has increased or decreased by the end of the source • how the writer uses structure to create an effect • the writer's use of any other structural features, such as changes in mood, tone or perspective. 	<p><u>First paragraph:</u> At the beginning, the writer focuses our attention on...(include quote). This introduces... <u>Second paragraph:</u> Later on in the extract, the writer shifts the focus to...(include quote). The writer does this to... <u>Third paragraph:</u> Interestingly, at the end, the writer makes the reader realise...(include quote) The ending is significant because... <u>Final comment:</u> Overall, the mood and atmosphere changes within the extract as...</p>
<p>Question 4 : Critical evaluation. You are given a statement about the text and must evaluate to what extent you agree, using evidence. The statement can be (20 marks)</p>	<p>In this part of the source, where the hyena comes out from under the tarpaulin, it could be seen as funny rather than threatening. The writer suggests that the hyena is actually no serious threat to Pi. To what extent do you agree and/or disagree with this statement? In your response, you could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consider your impressions of how the hyena behaves • comment on the methods the writer uses to present the hyena • support your response with references to the text 	<p>I somewhat/partially/wholly agree that... The writer (link to statement) through the use of [lang Technique]... : " _____ ". This can be seen when ... This makes the reader feel... This interests the reader because... (link back to statement). The word ' _____ ' connotes _____ therefore... The technique of _____ is used to show... This is very effective because... The writer has chosen this because...</p>

Language Paper 1 – The non-negotiables

When revising Language Paper 1 – these are the things we NEED to know:

Question summary	Exemplar Question	Sentence stems		
<p>Question 5 (40 marks): You are given a statement and must write your own non-fiction text (e.g., an article, letter, or speech) to express a viewpoint for a specific audience and purpose. 24 marks for content and organization. 16 marks for technical accuracy (spelling, punctuation, and grammar).</p>	<p>Write the opening of a story about a human meeting an animal.</p>	The 4-Part Success Story.		
		Part	Key Features	
		Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce your story by focusing on the setting • Describe the weather/environments/surroundings/objects/decor • DEVICES: Personification/pathetic fallacy/symbolism/preposition /foreshadowing 	
		Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe your character(s) within your setting • One or two characters – keep it minimal • Craft their action/behaviour to reflect their personality and emotions (show not tell). • DEVICES: sensory language/similes/metaphors/minimal dialogue 	
		Flashback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a flashback to teach the reader something about your character and/or their world • Begin this section with a memory trigger • This memory should contrast your characters current situation • DEVICES: Sensory language/juxtaposition/light imagery/similes/metaphors /symbolism 	
Return to the Scene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin this section with a trigger that forces your character back to their current world • Offer a glimpse of change – that will progress the story • Return to something that you described in opening to create a cyclical structure • DEVICES: Sensory language/personification/pathetic fallacy/symbolism 			

Language Paper 2 – The non-negotiables

When revising Language Paper 2 – these are the things we NEED to know:

Question summary	Exemplar Question	Sentence stems	Marks
<p>Question 1 : A true/false task. You must choose four correct statements from a list of eight based on a specific section of Source A.</p>	<p>'Choses four statements below which are true'</p>		(4 marks)
<p>Question 2 : A summary task. You need to synthesize information from both sources, typically focusing on similarities or differences between a specific subject in each.</p>	<p>Refer to Source A and Source B. 'What can you infer about the similarities/differences between the two [subject matter].'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Source A, the writer presents..... • This is shown in the text/when it states, “.....” • This could suggest, Because..... • In contrast/Similarly, in Source B, the writer presents..... • This is shown in the text/when it states, “.....” • This could suggest, because..... 	(8 marks)
<p>Question 3 : Language analysis. Focus on a specific extract from one source and explain how the writer uses language (e.g., metaphors, word choice, sentence structure) to achieve effects.</p>	<p>'How does the writer use language to describe...'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer uses to describe • This is shown in the text/when it states, “.....” • The use of the word, “.....” has connotations of because • This makes the reader feel because..... • Furthermore, the writer uses to describe • This is shown in the text/when it states, “.....” • The use of the word, “.....” has connotations of because • This makes the reader feel because..... 	(12 marks)
<p>Question 4: Comparison of viewpoints. Compare how the two writers convey their different perspectives or attitudes, focusing on the "methods" they use (e.g., tone, structure, language).</p>	<p>Refer to Source A and Source B.</p> <p>'Compare how the writers convey their different thoughts and feeling about ...'</p> <p>In your answer, you could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare their different thoughts and feelings about ... • Comment on the methods the writer uses... • Support with references to the text 	<p>In Source A, the writer feels about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is shown in the text/when it states, “.....” • The use of the word, “.....” has connotations of because • This illustrates how the writer feels because..... <p>In contrast, in Source B, the writer feels about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is shown in the text/when it states, “.....” • The use of the word, “.....” has connotations of because • This illustrates how the writer feels because..... 	(16 marks)

Language Paper 2 – The non-negotiables

When revising Language Paper 2 – these are the things we NEED to know:

Question summary	Exemplar Question	Sentence stems		Marks												
<p>Question 5 (40 marks): You are given a statement and must write your own non-fiction text (e.g., an article, letter, or speech) to express a viewpoint for a specific audience and purpose.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24 marks for content and organization. • 16 marks for technical accuracy (spelling, punctuation, and grammar) 	<p><i>'Holidays don't need to be faraway and expensive. They just need to give people a break from everyday life and a chance to relax.'</i></p> <p>Write an article/letter/speech for a [text type] in which you argue your point of view on this statement.</p>	<p>Dystopian Opening paragraph - 'imagine a world where...'</p> <p>3 TEDDYS paragraphs</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1166 482 2333 1308"> <tr> <td data-bbox="1166 482 1437 591">Topic sentence</td> <td data-bbox="1437 482 2333 591">An opening sentence that includes the focus of the paragraph.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1166 591 1437 699">Example</td> <td data-bbox="1437 591 2333 699"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethos – example from an expert, or an anecdote. • Logos – a statistic or fact. </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1166 699 1437 939">Development</td> <td data-bbox="1437 699 2333 939"> Detail and expand the main points or inclusion of additional points. Examine the problem arising. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyday ... • The harsh reality is ... • This is becoming a growing issue ... </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1166 939 1437 1048">Device</td> <td data-bbox="1437 939 2333 1048">Support example and development using ethos, pathos or logos devices.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1166 1048 1437 1202">Your viewpoint/opinion</td> <td data-bbox="1437 1048 2333 1202"> Direct address to give your view on this matter. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think that... • It is my belief... </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1166 1202 1437 1308">Solutions</td> <td data-bbox="1437 1202 2333 1308"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The solution is clear ... • We must act now... </td> </tr> </table> <p>Utopian Opening paragraph - 'Now imagine a world where...'</p>		Topic sentence	An opening sentence that includes the focus of the paragraph.	Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethos – example from an expert, or an anecdote. • Logos – a statistic or fact. 	Development	Detail and expand the main points or inclusion of additional points. Examine the problem arising. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyday ... • The harsh reality is ... • This is becoming a growing issue ... 	Device	Support example and development using ethos, pathos or logos devices.	Your viewpoint/opinion	Direct address to give your view on this matter. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think that... • It is my belief... 	Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The solution is clear ... • We must act now... 	<p>24 (Content and organisation)</p> <p>16 (technical accuracy)</p>
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