‘TOP TIPS’ FOR GCSE ENGLISH – PAPER 2

Answer **Section B** first – question 5.

- This question asks you to produce a piece of **opinion writing**, expressing your **point of view** on a subject or idea, in a particular **form**.
- You could be asked to **explain, instruct, advise, argue** or **persuade** in the question.
- You may be asked to write a **letter, article, text for a leaflet, text of a speech or an essay** and you need to follow the conventions and style of the text type in the question.
- You have **45 minutes** to plan and answer this question.
- There are **40 marks** for this answer:
  - 24 marks for content and organisation
  - 16 marks for technical accuracy
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Answer **Section B** first – question 5.

FAIL TO PLAN, PLAN TO FAIL!

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**PLAN**

- CONTENT/ideas:
  - Not everyone has books and computers to help.
  - Too much homework puts students under pressure.
  - Not all teachers mark homework.

- DISAGREE:
  - Homework can help develop independent learning and organisational skills.

- TECHNIQUES:
  - Headline and strapline.
  - Direct address – ‘YOU’.
  - Sentence/paragraph structures.
  - Repetition.
  - Hyperbole.
  - Tricolons/triplets.
  - Imperatives.
  - Quotes from experts and ‘eye’ witnesses.

- VOCABULARY:
  - Range of punctuation (!, ?, ;, :).
  - Discourse markers.

- RHETORICAL QUESTIONS

- EMOTIVE LANGUAGE

- ANECDOTE

- STATISTICS

- COUNTER-ARGUMENT – ‘BUT’ OR ‘HOWEVER’
Planning an answer – be sure to include the following features in your writing:

- **An engaging/interesting** introduction e.g. a question, a bold statement, an anecdote, emotive language. For example, Is homework hell in your house?
- A clear argument **for OR against** the statement.
- **Paragraphs** organised in an orderly sequence.
- **Discourse markers** to chart the stages of your argument – for example, firstly, also, furthermore, significantly, although, notably, in conclusion.
- A variety of **sentence and paragraph structures**.
- A range of **persuasive techniques**.
- A range of **punctuation** (question marks, exclamation, colon, semi-colon, dash, ellipsis, inverted commas etc.)
- Interesting **vocabulary**.
- End with a **firm, clear** conclusion.
- A style and tone appropriate to your **purpose/audience**.
- The relevant **conventions** for the **form** of your writing.
- Accurate Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (**SPaG**) .
- **Check** through your work to make **corrections and improvements**.
Plan for content and methods/techniques.
Use a range of persuasive and argumentative techniques – for example:

- **RHETORICAL QUESTIONS** e.g. ‘What do you think about homework?’
- **TRIPLETS (groups of three)** e.g. ‘I am upset, outraged and disappointed.
- **QUOTATIONS FROM EXPERTS AND THOSE WITH FIRST HAND KNOWLEDGE** e.g. Dr Hallam an expert on childhood stated:
  ‘Homework damages children for life.’ John Smith a pupil at my school said: ‘Homework is hard work.’
- **MAKE UP STATISTICS TO SUPPORT YOUR CASE**
  e.g. 9 out of 10 children prefer homework to sport. 70% of those surveyed hated moths.
- **THE COUNTER-ARGUMENT** – present the other side then use the word **but** or **however**.
  e.g. Some people say cat meat tastes fine, **but** it may damage your health.
- **ANECDOTE** – a little story to illustrate your point. E.g. A 13 year old girl tripped over her school bag and was injured by the weight of her homework.
You may want to think carefully about the order in which you approach the questions in Section A in order to target the highest marks.

Question 1

• This question asks you to identify and interpret information from a section of Source A only.
• You have 5 mins to answer this question.
• There are 4 marks for this answer.
• You have to find 4 TRUE statements from a list of 8.
• Check back in the text to find your four answers.
• Shade the circle inside the square if the statement is TRUE.

• Follow the instructions on the paper if you make a mistake (if you make an error cross out the whole box, if you change your mind again, draw a circle round the box.)
PAPER 2 – SECTION A – 1 hour

Question 2

• This question asks you to write a SUMMARY of a particular aspect of the two texts (Source A and B.) e.g. Write a summary of the different ways people are affected by the weather.
• You have 8 mins to answer this question.
• There are 8 marks for this answer.
• You must write about both Sources.
• You DO NOT have to refer to writers’ methods in this answer
• Identify 2 relevant ideas from each Source.
• Select quotations for each idea.
• Try to respond to implicit rather than obvious ideas.
• Use the P.E.E. or S.Q.I. structure for each idea.
• Draw inferences (the impressions you get) from each point that you make.
• Use discourse markers to move between the sources e.g. in addition alternately,, also, on the other hand...
PAPER 2 – SECTION A – 1 hour
Question 3
- This question asks you to analyse how language and sentence structure are used to influence the reader in a section of one Source only.
- You have 15 mins to answer this question.
- There are 12 marks for this answer.
- Make sure you select the correct area of the source.
- Find 3 or 4 interesting quotations that use imagery and interesting language and that link back to the key idea in the question. e.g. how the storm is described.
- Identify the language methods/techniques being used in those quotations. e.g. metaphor, simile, personification, onomatopoeia, adjectives, verbs, sensual language etc.
- Write about what you infer (the impression you get) from those quotations, making the link back to the key word(s) in the question.
- Draw more than one inference if you want more marks. e.g. ‘The wind howled and moaned’... the verbs ‘howled and moaned’ personify the wind, making it sound as if it is like a person or animal in pain. They also give it a supernatural feel since we associate these words with a ghost...’
Question 4

- This question asks you look at the whole of Source A and Source B to compare:
  a) The writers’ perspectives, viewpoints and attitudes (their thoughts, feelings, opinions about the idea/subject)
  b) The methods they use to convey these perspectives, viewpoints and attitudes (e.g. language techniques, sentences structures etc.)

- You have 22 mins to answer this question.
- There are 16 marks for this answer.
- Identify at least two contrasting viewpoints or attitudes the writers of Source A and Source B express about their experiences.
- Identify the methods the writer has used in each of your quotations to help show their viewpoints and attitudes.
- Select quotations to support the viewpoints or attitudes you have identified
- Analyse how the writers’ use of methods helps to convey their viewpoints or attitudes – draw inferences and explain how you get an impression of their viewpoint from, for example, the language used...
- Use comparative discourse markers (‘On the other hand...’ / ‘In contrast...’ etc.) to compare the two texts.
And finally...

- Read the questions carefully
- Make sure you plan before writing
- Keep an eye on the time
- Start with Section B – think about the best way to target the highest marks in Section A
- Try to answer all of the questions
- Make sure you write detailed answers on questions that carry high marks
- This is an English exam – write clearly and accurately

Good luck!