



# **BGE English**



# **Course Notes**

## Course Outline

- Pupils will write creatively, argumentatively and analytically.
- Pupils will study a range of literature including novels, plays, poetry and media texts.
- Pupils will develop their close reading skills.
- Pupils will undertake personal reading.
- Pupils will perform a solo talk or take part in a group discussion.

## Studying at Home

It is most definitely a myth that you cannot study for English! In addition to completing set homework, you should be reading regularly at home and you will also find notes on many of your taught texts online to help you develop your knowledge.

### Useful Websites

<https://freerice.com/categories/english-vocabulary>  
[www.sparknotes.com](http://www.sparknotes.com)  
<https://www.dictionary.com/>  
[www.freerice.com](http://www.freerice.com)

<https://www.vocabulary.com/>  
[www.litcharts.com](http://www.litcharts.com)  
<https://www.thesaurus.com/>  
[www.dogonews.com](http://www.dogonews.com)

## Reading at Home

### Reading for personal enjoyment

- We consider reading a variety of texts one of the main tasks that will help you achieve in English. The more you read, the better your vocabulary will be. Did you know that a person knows about 16,000 words by the time they are 16?
- But reading does not only expand your vocabulary, it will also help you become a better writer, a better speaker and better at understanding texts.
- Make sure you read different types of texts: stories, news, non-fiction, plays, poetry...



## S1 - S2 Reading Awards Scheme

- As part of your library period, you will now be asked to undertake a reading awards scheme.
- This will involve you reading a range of books and completing tasks on them.
- You will begin with the bronze award. After that you can also earn silver, gold or even platinum.
- You will be given a booklet (online or on paper) and undertake the following:

BRONZE: read 5 books and undertake 5 activities

SILVER: read 10 books and undertake 10 activities

GOLD: read 15 books and undertake a range of activities, leading to an essay on one book

PLATINUM: read 20 books and write a chapter of your own book

- Your teacher will give you deadlines for your awards. However, as soon as you have achieved one, you can start the next level.

### The Rules:

1. Everyone should complete at least the bronze award by the end of the year.
2. You will complete your booklet online and submit each task one at a time via Google classroom. For the tasks which involve drawing, you may wish to complete this on separate paper and submit a picture instead.
3. You should work on your awards during your library period and/or at home in your own time.
4. Your parent/guardian should initial the table on page 2 once you have finished reading each book.
5. You must complete one activity per book as part of both the bronze and silver award.
6. You may only read two books as part of a series.
7. You should read a maximum of two books by one author as part of an award booklet.

## Writing

## Key information

- During each academic year, you will produce **at least two pieces** of writing. Over the course of S1-3, you will gain experience in writing short stories, personal essays, discursive and persuasive essays and poetry. This is to ensure that you have experience in all genres before starting your qualifications.
- There is no set word limit for pieces of writing in S1-3. However, be aware that the **maximum** word count for writing pieces in S4 is **1000 words** and so we recommend that you do not exceed this in S1-3.

## Personal Writing

This genre requires you to write about a personal experience that is important to you. Maybe it helped to shape you as a person in some way or maybe you connect it with really strong emotions such as sadness, fear or pride.

In this piece of writing, make sure that you include lots of thoughts and feelings. Try to add in description as you would in a story and to use other techniques such as imagery and varied sentence structure. Finally, try to look back and reflect on the experience. Is there anything you would do differently now? How do you feel about what happened looking back?

## Possible Topics

<i>A memorable holiday</i>	<i>A time you overcame a fear</i>
<i>A big change in your family</i>	<i>An inspirational person in your life</i>
<i>An accident</i>	<i>A time when you made a difficult choice</i>
<i>A time when you took part in an event</i>	<i>Your proudest moment</i>
<i>Starting a new school</i>	<i>Learning an important lesson</i>
<i>Learning a new skill or hobby</i>	<i>A place that means something special to you</i>

## Short Story

You must develop **characterisation, setting and theme** as well as create an interesting **plot**. Sometimes less is more: using language well and creating believable characters is more important than devising a complex plot. Look at the **techniques glossary** and try to use a range of them in your story. Try to stick to one or two key settings and one main character. Remember to keep dialogue to a minimum and to set it out correctly.

If you are stuck, often creating a detailed character profile is a good starting point. Then build a story plot around something that would happen to them.

## Broadly Discursive

**Discursive writing** requires you to present a balanced case, weighing up **both** sides of an argument before you come to a final decision in your conclusion.

Remember to **make use of evidence** to support your case as well as **good persuasive techniques (see examples below)**. You can use anecdotes, facts, statistics and opinions from experts in the field as evidence to back up your argument. You should use books or the internet to research your topic before writing.

**Persuasive writing** has a similar purpose but instead of weighing up two sides of an argument, your essay should be mostly **one-sided**. Make sure you choose a topic you are passionate about and your task is to persuade your reader that your point of view is correct. You should also include **evidence** to back up your point of view, as well as lots of persuasive techniques. It would also be a good idea to include a point from the other side of the case but you should try to prove that this viewpoint is wrong.

Your teacher may ask you to include a **bibliography** to show which internet sources or books you have used for evidence.

Possible topics for discursive and persuasive writing are included below:

<b>Discursive Topic Ideas</b>	
IMPORTANT: In discursive writing you should have a question which you are trying to answer. Try formulating questions from the following topics. For example: 'Should the right to carry arms be revoked in America?'	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Gun laws</li><li>● Smart Phones</li><li>● Social Media</li><li>● School Uniform</li><li>● Reality television</li><li>● Consumer / throw-away society</li><li>● Dependence on technology</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Violent video games</li><li>● Animal Testing/animal rights</li><li>● Renewable Energy</li><li>● Recycling</li><li>● Zoos</li><li>● Dangerous Dogs</li><li>● School exams</li><li>● Capital punishment</li><li>● Gambling</li></ul>

<b>Persuasive Statements</b>
IMPORTANT: In persuasive writing, you must adopt a clear stance and your task is to persuade your reader that your view is correct. Your title should ideally make your stance clear. E.g.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Social media makes it easier to spread hate</li><li>● People today are too dependent on technology</li><li>● National service should be made compulsory</li><li>● Schools should all have a mandatory school uniform</li><li>● Vaccines should be mandatory</li><li>● Voting should be compulsory</li></ul>

- We need to invest in space exploration
- Zoos/animal testing should be banned
- Bring back the death penalty

## Persuasive Techniques

**RHETORICAL QUESTION**

A question designed to make the reader think; doesn't need an answer

*Why would anyone want to hunt foxes with dogs?  
Isn't the solution obvious?*

**Q&A**

Asking a question and then answering it makes it seem like your answer is right

*Should we murder animals? Of course not.*

**OPINION AS FACT**

To present beliefs as if they are factual truths

*This is an excellent school.  
Obviously, hunting is cruel.*

**SUPERLATIVE**

Adjective to imply the highest or lowest quality

*This is the **best** school in the area.  
It is the **worst** book ever written.*

**EMOTIVE LANGUAGE**

Words and phrases to make the reader **feel** something

*The fox is **torn viciously apart** by **savage** dogs.*

**PRONOUNS**

Refers to people to identify the reader/writer relationship

*We **all feel that**...  
Surely **you** can see...*

**FLATTERY**

Saying nice things about the reader to get them on your side

*As you are the sort of customer that appreciates quality...*

**SHORT SENTENCES  
FOR IMPACT**

Short, pithy sentences  
can be very emphatic

*Stop. Stop now.*

*Is this right? No.*

**TRIPLES**

To repeat an idea or  
image three times,  
usually in a slightly  
different way

*Hunting is evil, cruel and  
out-dated.*

*Do it well, do it fast and  
do it now.*

**IMAGERY**

Metaphors, similes and  
personification can be  
used to persuade if  
chosen carefully

*The jewel-like waters are  
being polluted.*

*Whales cry for their  
future.*

**ADDRESSING THE  
READER DIRECTLY**

Appealing directly to the  
reader's sense of ethics  
or emotions

*Surely you do not want to  
see the natural world  
destroyed.*

*You must agree that...*

**LISTING**

Lists can be used to  
emphasise the number or  
scale of a problem

*Teenagers are always  
criticised for something:  
drinking, smoking, talking,  
kissing, existing...*

**HYPERBOLE**

Exaggeration

*While we wait, the whole  
country holds its breath.*

**SOUND TECHNIQUES**

Alliteration  
Assonance  
Sibilance

*Cold, callous and cruel.*

*Smooth, slick and slimy.*



## The Critical Essay

### Top Tips

- Knowledge of the text is key. The better you know your text, the better you will write.
- Choose the question **carefully** and make sure you answer **both parts** of it
- Link to the question in **every paragraph**. Try to use different vocabulary to do this – avoid repeating the exact words from the question over & over
- Refer to techniques using the **correct terminology**
- Aim for 1 to 2 sides of A4

### Essay Structure

- Link to **the question** in your intro by putting its keywords into your sentence
- NEVER say “*In this essay I will....*” or “*I am going to...*” or “*A novel I have been studying is...*”
- Conclusion must **sum up**; link to the **question** AND contain your **evaluation**. (*NOT: “I like this poem because...”*) Evaluate the impact of the text on the reader or audience and comment on the message your author was trying to convey – stay relevant to the question here though.

### Writing the Essay

- Incorporate **shorter quotations** into your sentence ‘like this’ to make your essay fluent.
- **Long quotations** of more than a line should be written out as follows:

“indented on a new line with a missed line before and after it”.

Then you would continue writing here.

- **Do not** begin paragraphs with a quotation; always use a topic sentence to begin. Topic sentences should introduce the **point** of your paragraph and **link to the question**. E.g. *Owen emphasises the **innocence and inexperience of the soldiers** (point of paragraph) **throughout the poem and this provokes strong feelings within the reader** (link to question).*
- Make sure you refer to **techniques** using the right **critical terminology**
- **Evaluation** should be included all through the essay. This is where you need to show engagement with the text. You can do this by inserting **evaluative words** into your sentences. E.g. *This **striking** scene makes it clear that things will only get worse for the soldiers.* See below for further examples of evaluative words.

## Word Banks

### Analysis

shows	portrays	establishes	highlights
depicts	conveys	illustrates	suggests
reinforces	reveals	emphasises	foreshadows

### Evaluation

important	shocking	distressing	effective
gripping	compelling	important	moving
poignant	fascinating	admirable	key

## Helpful Acronyms

INTRODUCTION: TART

**T**ITLE



**T**O TASK

**A**UTHOR

**R**ELATE

PEAR

- **P**oint
- **E**vidence
- **A**nalysis
- **R**efer to task



## Key Terms

<b>Parts of Speech</b>	
Noun	A naming word which names a person, creature, thing or quality: <i>table/danger</i> .
Pronoun	A word that stands instead of a noun: <i>I/he/she</i>
Adjective	A word that tells us more/describes a noun or pronoun: He is <i>sad</i> .
Verb	An action word, which tells us what happened: She <i>screamed</i> .
Adverb	A word that tells us more about a verb; how the action was done: she screamed <i>loudly</i> .
Preposition	A word used in front of a noun or pronoun to make a phrase showing where, when or how something was done: The cat was <i>in</i> the tree.
Conjunction	A joining word which links words or groups of words: Fish <i>and</i> chips/For better <i>or</i> worse.
Interjection	A word of exclamation: <i>wow!</i>

<b>Punctuation marks and their uses</b>	
Colon :	Introduces a quote, a list or an expansion or explanation of the previous statement
Semi-Colon ;	Joins or separates two statements which are closely connected, or which balance or contrast one another (a technique known as <i>antithesis</i> ). May also be used to separate a list of <i>phrases</i> .
Parenthesis – – ( ) , ,	Parenthesis is extra information within a sentence; enclosed by dashes, brackets or commas. The meaning of the sentence remains the same if the parenthesis is removed. NB. Remember to explain what the information adds to the sentence!
Ellipsis ...	Used to indicate a pause, create suspense or show that words have been missed out (in a quotation).
Inverted commas “ ” ‘ ’	Are used to enclose: direct speech; quotations; titles of books, films, etc; enclose unfamiliar terms, slang or foreign impressions OR to show irony.
<i>Italics or italic type</i>	Can be used for titles of books, films etc. or to show that a word should be emphasised. Also sometimes used to show a character's inner thoughts.
Single dash –	A single dash shows a pause longer than a comma. It can also produce emphasis of the words following the dash.
Hyphen -	A hyphen links two words together to form a compound word.

Sentence Structure Techniques	
Statement	A sentence that tells you something. A statement ends with a full stop. <i>I have lost my pencil.</i>
Command	A sentence ordering you to do something. A command also ends with a full stop. <i>Now stir the mixture.</i>
Question	A sentence asking something. Ends with a question mark. <i>Have you got my bag?</i>
Rhetorical question	A question that does not expect an answer. <i>Will you stop crying?</i>
Exclamation	A sentence that ends with an exclamation mark. Usually shows surprise, happiness, excitement or anger. <i>Look at that!</i> or <i>How dare you!</i>
Minor sentence	An ungrammatical sentence that does not contain a verb but can still convey a clear unit of meaning. <i>How are you getting home? By bus.</i>
Inversion	A sentence in which the word order is backwards so the subject appears after the verb. It can emphasise the important words. This is a very distinctive type of sentence that sounds like Yoda from 'Star Wars'! <i>Help you, I will.</i>
List	A list of words or phrases separated by a comma or semi-colon. This is often used to emphasise the number of something. E.g. the number of shops to visit in the shopping centre.
Short Sentences	Sentences which are short in length to make them stand out, inject drama, add excitement or introduce a sudden revelation.
Long sentences	Sentences which are long in length to perhaps highlight the complexity of an issue, mirror the size of something, give a rant and so on.
Repetition	Repeating key words or phrases for emphasis

Figures of Speech	
Simile	Comparison using 'like' or 'as' to something unexpected but which shares a common feature ( <i>light as a feather</i> ).
Metaphor	Comparison by saying one thing <u>is</u> another thing it only resembles ( <i>blanket of snow</i> ).
Personification	Giving an inanimate object human characteristics or intentions ( <i>the sea roared angrily at the beach</i> ).
Onomatopoeia	Sound words ( <i>crash, bang, wallop</i> ).
Alliteration	Repeated letters at the start of words ( <i>rifles' rapid rattle</i> ).
Assonance	Repeated vowel sound ( <i>how now, brown cow or angry ants ate apples</i> ).
Sibilance	Repetition of 's' ( <i>slithering, slimy snake</i> ).

Im  
ag  
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Sou  
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s

