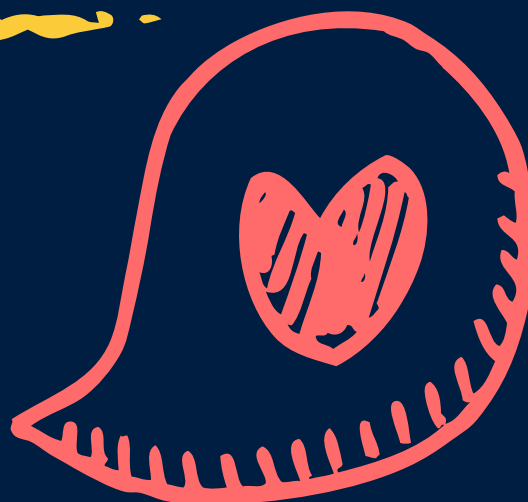


Start early!

How to prepare your KS3 child for GCSE



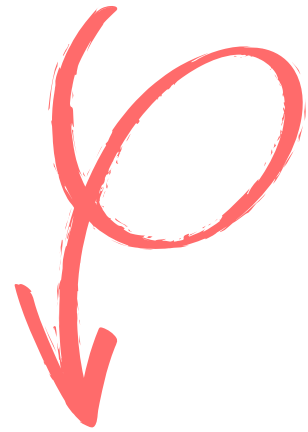
Much Ado About
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Tip 1: Know the destination

To know how to prepare your child, you need to know where they need to get to.

Here are some example exam questions they will need to be able to answer by year 11!



How does the writer use language to create a sense of ... ?

Students need to be able to locate quotations that will help answer the question and explain how this quotation creates the effect.

What impression do you get of the writer / character?

Here, students need to be able to make points. The writer / character is scared / angry / delusional. They need to select evidence and explain how it creates this impression.

How does the writer use methods to...

Students need to be able to pick out and explain how writers' methods work - for example, simile, imagery, repetition, structure

Compare the opinions of two writers

This is usually across poetry and non-fiction texts. Students need to analyse similarities and differences and how these are made clear - as well as identify changes in a writer's viewpoint across a text. (Comparison is often the skill GCSE students find hardest)

Summarise what you learn about...

In this sort of question, students need to INFER rather than analyse. This means explaining the impression the reader gets from a text rather than what the writer has tried to do.

Write a story, description, essay, article, letter, speech

Writing articulately, creatively and imaginatively across a variety of styles. Ensuring grammar, spelling and punctuation are controlled.

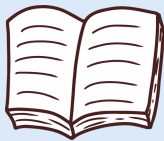
Tip 2: Read widely

Students who read lots, do well at English. Those who don't read, tend to struggle.



It makes sense... Readers have a better vocabulary, are more expressive, learn about the crafting of language.

However, it is important to read **widely too.**



Read Fiction

Read a variety of genres – adventure, fantasy, real-life. Discuss characters, heroes, villains, character arcs, narrative voice.

Read classics made accessible (abridged versions) to build stamina and expose students to older language.

Read modern teen fiction by writers such as Malorie Blackman, Celia Rees, Michael Morpurgo. Discuss THEMES.



Read Non-Fiction

Read newspapers and magazine pieces that interest your child. Talk about the writer's viewpoint and whether they agree.

Read speeches – famous ones like Martin Luther King, Greta Thunberg or Malala Yousafzai, also watch TED talks. Use them to spark discussion.

Read travel writing – Bill Bryson is very funny.

Read biographies and memoirs – there are many written for young people!



Read Poetry

Read accessible classic poets such as Christina Rossetti, Robert Frost, Wilfred Owen. Initially, look for shorter poems.

Read modern voices such as Carol Ann Duffy, Simon Armitage, Benjamin Zephaniah, Wendy Cope

If your child is new to poetry, begin with poems for children to build confidence. Michael Rosen is great!

When reading poetry, discuss the mood it creates, the feelings it contains, the ideas and the poet's message.

Tip 3: How to read with your older child



At Primary, it's easy. Your child comes home with a Biff and Chip book and you listen to them sound words out.

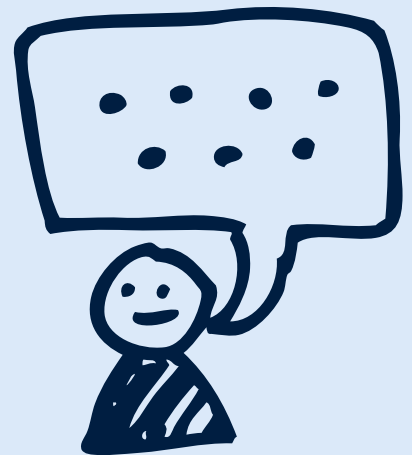
But what about at KS3? Here's how to read with your older child - and **build their future skills** whilst doing it!

Every now and then, pause and ask them **TEACHER QUESTIONS**. The point of these is not just to check understanding, but to allow them to explore language, structure, characterisation - the writer's craft. This not only allows them to learn how to craft writing themselves, but gives them ideas they will need for future analytical essays.

Question like an English teacher

✓ For fiction:

- What's going on here?
- How does this fit in with what happened earlier?
- How do you think this character might be feeling?
- Which words make you think that?
- Why do you think the writer included this scene after the last scene?
- Why do you think the writer chose this character's point of view here?
- What might happen next?
- What does this word tell you about what the character is thinking?
- Why do you think the writer chose to use (simile, metaphor, description, dialogue) here?



✓ For non-fiction:

- What's the text about?
- What does the writer believe?
- How has the writer tried to get you to agree with them?
- Do you agree or disagree with the writer's viewpoint?

For every question, ask **"Why do you think that?"**

Tip 4: Build writing confidence early

When it comes to GCSE English, students need to learn how to shape ideas, craft sentences, and write with a purpose. The good news? These skills can be built gradually and naturally, long before exam pressure sets in.

Write little and often! Encourage your child to keep a journal, email friends, write letters!

Give your child an image or creative writing prompt and encourage them to write a story!

Play with sentences. Write the same sentence to reflect different moods or genres. Try out different openings - for example, an adverb or 'ing' word

Write a letter to a famous person - they might even get a response!

Writing reviews is a great way to practise non-fiction writing. Review films, books, recipes, shops, products, sport matches!

Teach your child new words and encourage them to use them!

Write a story with your child - you start it, they continue, you carry on etc. Writing together can be great fun!

Use fiction you are reading for writing. Write a scene as a different character, write a missing scene or a different ending.

Build confidence and resilience.

Only correct a few things at once and make sure to tell your child what they are doing well. Praise effort and creativity as well as spelling, punctuation and grammar!



I hope this helped!

If you want to chat about how I might be able to further support your child, get in touch!



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