



17th February 2017

Dear Parent/Carer,

Your Year 11 son/daughter will be sitting mock exams for English and Mathematics the week beginning 13th March, these exams will give teachers vital information on areas of strengths, weakness and misconceptions at an individual level.

Students should be revising this half term as well as the weeks running up to the exams, so with this in mind we have asked the curriculum leaders for English and Mathematics to give some specific advice for this preparation to support students focus but also to inform parents so they can support accordingly.

Day	When	Time	Exam
Tuesday 14/3	P1&2	1.30hrs	Maths Paper 1 (non-calc)
Tuesday 14/3	P3&4	1.45hrs	English Lit
Thursday 16/3	P1&2	1.30hrs	Maths Paper 2 (calc)
Thursday 16/3	P3&4	1.45hrs	English Lang
Friday 17/3	P1&2	1.30hrs	Maths Paper 3 (calc)

Your support in the coming months will be a major factor in your child's successes, encouragement and motivation to plan and complete revision is your major role. Please read through the following information with your son/daughter and support them with this preparation.

For parents who couldn't make it to this week's Parents Evening please be aware we still have a range of revision guides and materials left which were on sale, just contact or come into reception if you would like to purchase some to support your child's revision. (see back page)

English Revision Advice for All Students

All of the exams in English require students to have good time management skills and every effort should be made to continually practise answering exam style questions within set time frames. Students should aim to improve their writing pace, challenging themselves to write more whilst continually maintaining accuracy in their work.

Some questions in the English exams are extended written pieces or essay style responses. Therefore, it would be beneficial if students worked on developing these skills.

Vale of York Academy
Rawcliffe Drive, Clifton (Without), York YO30 6ZS
Tel: 01904 560000 Fax: 01904 560067
Email: contact@valeofyorkacademy.org
www.valeofyorkacademy.org



Several revision guides are available to purchase in school that support every unit of study for GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature; it is recommended that students make use of these supportive tools as they provide detailed, thorough and clear guidance on how to approach all questions. In addition, they contain specimen papers and model responses. Specific details for each exam paper can be found on the exam board's website (www.aqa.org.uk) and in the Year 11 support materials given out at Parents' Evening.

Specific Revision Advice for Set 1 (Ms C McMullan) and Set 2 (Ms P Doust)

A focus has been placed on the Literature papers over the last half term; as such it is imperative that students in these sets begin to place a priority on their English Language skills during the break. They should particularly work on:

- Paper 1: Analysing prose fiction texts from both the 20th and 21st century. Examples would include extracts from novels and short stories, placing a focus on openings and endings. Narrative perspectives should also be considered alongside analysis of points of view, narrative or descriptive passages, character and atmospheric descriptions.
- Paper 1: Writing for designated audiences, purposes and forms; students should attempt writing in response to visual prompts (such as a picture of a specific scene) or written prompts (e.g. describe an isolated and lonely place). Any picture of a setting or scene (for example, a busy street or airport terminal) will serve as a good visual prompt for writing.
- Paper 2: Looking at two linked texts from different time periods and genres in order to consider how each presents a viewpoint or perspective to influence the reader.
- Paper 2: Practise producing written texts that are targeted at specific audiences, purposes and forms in which students give their own perspective on a theme that has been introduced earlier in the Reading section of the paper (For example: '*Aeroplane travel is bad for the environment and unnecessarily dangerous. More people should use other forms of transport for long - distance journeys.*' Write an article for a broadsheet newspaper in which you explain your point of view on this statement.)
- Familiarising themselves with various genres of writing, such as high quality journalism, articles, reports, essays, travel writing, accounts, sketches, letters, diaries, autobiography and biographical passages.

Specific Revision Advice for Set 3 (Miss V Busgeeth) and Set 4 (Miss S Farag)

A focus has been placed on both Language papers over the last half term; as such it is imperative that students in these sets equally split their revision time between the different texts that will appear on the Literature exam papers. These include:

- Paper 1: A Christmas Carol (Charles Dickens)- students should have familiarity with key extracts whilst understanding the novel in its entirety. Key quotes around characters and themes should be learnt as this is a closed book exam.
- Paper 1: Romeo and Juliet (William Shakespeare)- students should have familiarity with key extracts whilst understanding the play in its entirety. Key quotes around characters and themes should be learnt as this is a closed book exam.
- Paper 2: An Inspector Calls (JB Priestley) – students should have a comprehensive understanding of the play. Key quotes should be learnt as this is a closed book exam.

- Paper 2: Love and Relationships Poetry Cluster (fifteen poems within the set anthology cluster)- students should work on developing their comparative poetry skills finding links and connections between the fifteen poems. Students should make every effort to familiarise themselves with all poems.
- Paper 2: Unseen Poetry- students should read a wide range of poetry, developing skills to closely analyse details. They should be able to analyse and compare key features such as their content, themes, structure and use of language. They need to revise poetic devices and be able to spot them in any poem they may encounter.

Mathematics Revision

Our next set of mock exams will take place after half term, in the week commencing 13th March. They will take the form of a full set of 3 specimen papers and as such your son/daughter should ensure they are as prepared as they can be.

Revision for maths is, in theory, very straight forward. Learn a skill, practise that skill and then test the skill in a problem solving environment. In practise however it is much more difficult to get the right materials to do it effectively.

To support this, we have a number of resources available to help study at home.

There are a number of websites we have subscribed to and whilst your son/daughter will have their login details already, I will ensure they have reminders of them before we break up for the half term.

www.mymaths.co.uk is a site which contains online lessons and practise questions and should be used to focus on very specific skills which may need refreshing.

www.justmaths.co.uk is another website containing explanatory videos and questions based by topic.

www.methodmaths.com is a website containing past GCSE exam papers and new specification papers which allow students to practice whilst giving tips on how to answer the specific questions. They are automatically marked as the student completes it.

In addition to this, students are able to download the PiXL Maths App (PMA) by searching 'PiXL' on either of the apple or android app stores. Students have been set up with login details and passwords to be able to make the most of this superb resource.

There are also some websites which don't need login details, but have excellent content;

www.corbettmaths.com is an excellent site containing videos explaining techniques and methods, organised by topic and also has a wealth of printable topic based questions and answers.

www.bbc.co.uk/education is the web address for BBC bitesize, an interactive resource which covers content and has practice question material.

Revision sessions have started after school on Mondays during period 6. If your son/daughter has this on their timetable they are expected to attend and a register is taken. I have been very pleased with the turnout so far. Students are welcome to attend voluntarily subject to there being enough room.


Unlike previous years, there is no longer a formula sheet attached to the exam papers and students will need to learn them instead. Separate formula sheets were handed out at parent's evening this week, but if you were unable to make it please ask your son/daughter to ask for one from their teacher. Other formulae which may be needed to answer questions will be included as part of the question itself.

All students will be set homework over half term by their class teachers to help them prepare for the mocks after the break. This will be a combination of topic based work and practise questions. If your son/daughter is in set 1 or 2 they will be doing higher level work, and if they are in set 3 or 4 they will be doing foundation level work. In addition to this they will be asked to complete a specimen paper which will form part of the work to be done after half term, and as such it is crucially important they complete it.

Our first week back after half term will focus purely on exam technique and how students can better access questions and communicate their answers in order to maximise the marks they achieve across all three papers. Should you have any questions please contact Mr Foster, Acting Head of Mathematics.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this information, which I am sure you will find invaluable for supporting your son and daughter for these mock exams and the coming months running up to the final examinations.

Yours Faithfully,



Mrs E Hardy- Assistant Vice Principal



Mr M Halifax – Vice Principal.