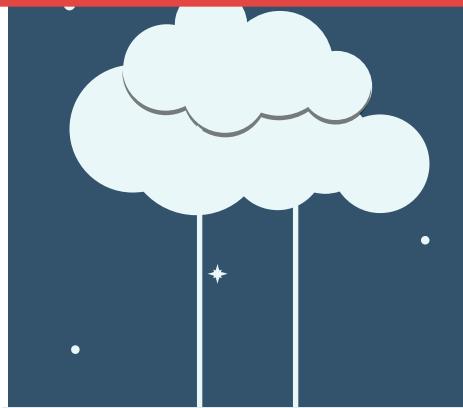


# AIMING HIGH IN GCSE ENGLISH



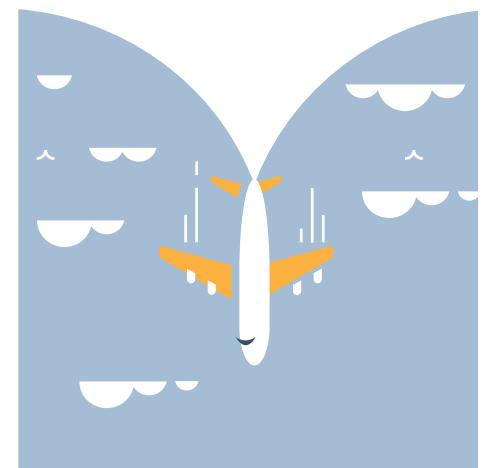
ACCESSING TOP  
MARKS IN  
ENGLISH

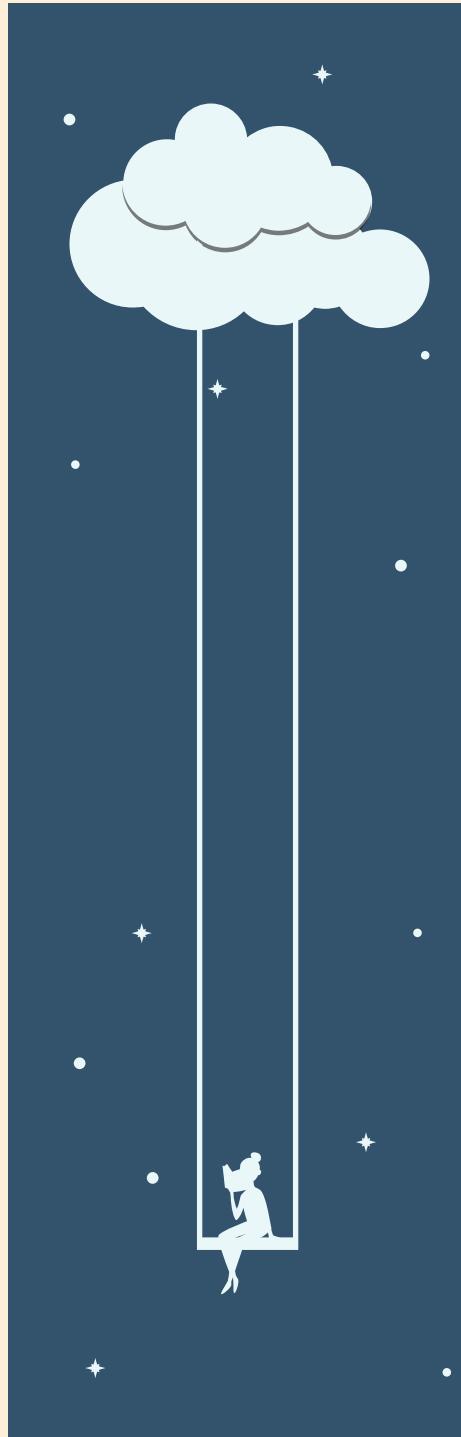


STRATEGIES TO  
RAISE YOUR  
GRADE

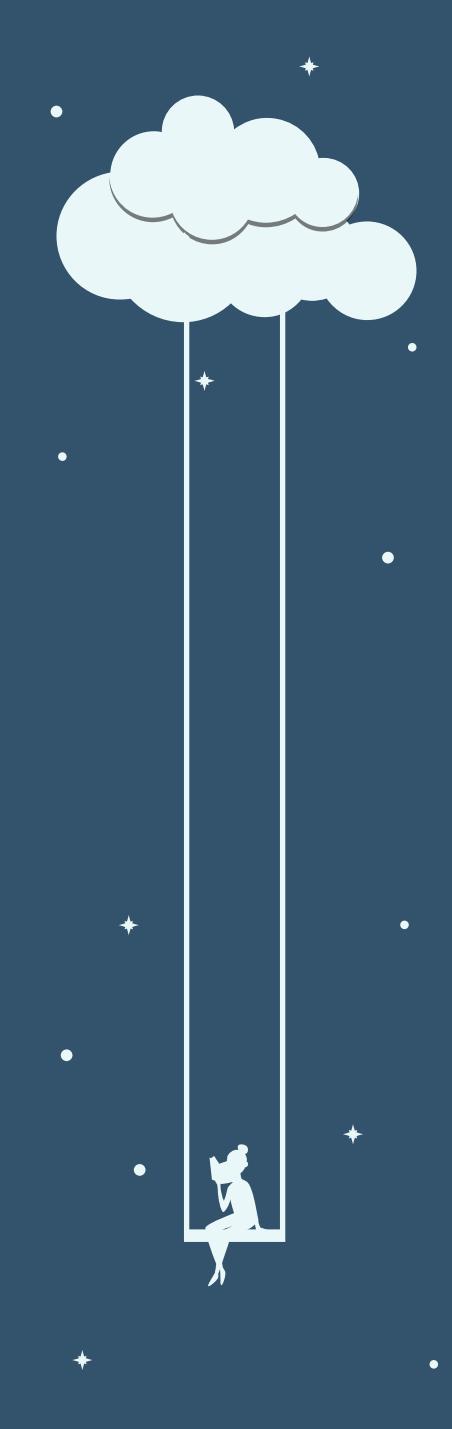


REVISION AND  
EXAM  
TECHNIQUE





Grade profile	Reading descriptors	Writing descriptors
8-9	Convincing, critical analysis and exploration	Compelling and convincing
6-7	Thoughtful and developed	
4-5	Clear understanding	Consistent and clear
2-3	Explained, structured comments	Some success



# Examiners' report

Creative and real world writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Avoid overly long narratives and description.</li><li>• Minimise use of direct speech.</li><li>• Vary sentences and punctuation for impact.</li><li>• Avoid pre-learnt vocab/phrases.</li><li>• Focus on audience and purpose.</li><li>• Strong tone and voice with conscious crafting of structure.</li></ul>
Essay writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use thesis statements.</li><li>• Embed argument in contextual understanding</li><li>• Avoid regurgitating social media content.</li><li>• Show insight without prescriptive structure/method e.g. PEE.</li><li>• Avoid technique spotting – explore writers' methods and meanings fully.</li><li>• Focus on insightful interpretation and explore deeper meanings; it's not a memory test.</li></ul>

# Interpretation grid

## Conceptual [ideas]

Themes and big ideas  
Patterns, connections and comparisons  
Values and beliefs  
Messages

## Contextual [time/place]

What the text reminds us of (other texts, experiences or things in the world)  
What it tells us about the world of the text/writer  
Historical/social conditions of the text  
What it tells us about our world

## Interpretation

## Emotional [feelings]

How characters/narrators/writers may feel  
Objectivity/subjectivity/empathy  
Psychological

**What the text makes us think/feel - why?**

## Technical [craft]

The construction/crafting of the text  
Form/audience/purpose  
Style/language/structure

## Abstract

- Big ideas (themes etc.)

Indeed, the whole passage might be Nesbit commenting ironically on the paranoia and ignorance of English travellers abroad.

- Writer's concerns

However, by investing simple events with perilous undertones, Nesbit might be concerned with depicting her own youthful naivety and innocence.

- Writer's methods

The harsh, abrupt sensation of the verb 'jolted' conveys an impression of being deliberately knocked, as if the laughter of the others creates a feeling of discomfort that adds to her unease.

- Narrative importance

The behaviour of the other passengers reinforces the narrator's sense of being out of place and of exclusion.

- Quotations

"These new passengers laughed and jolted in a language wholly unintelligible to us."

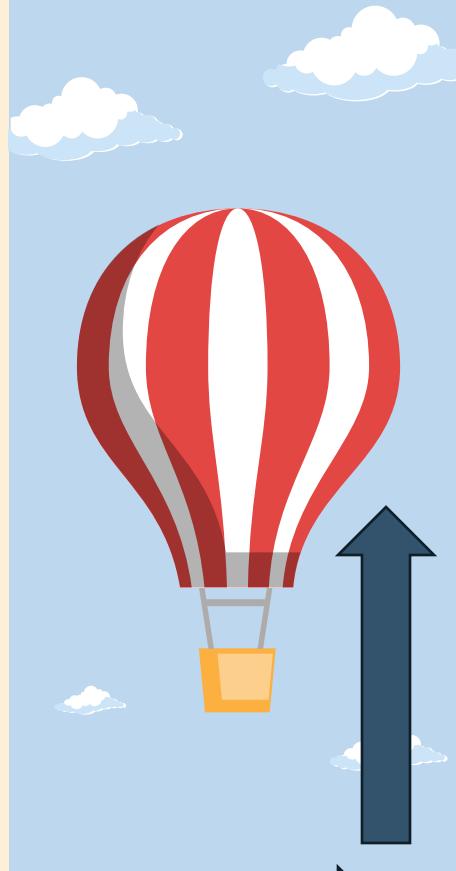
- Things that happen in the text

Nesbit describes how the other passengers in the carriage behave towards her.

## Concrete



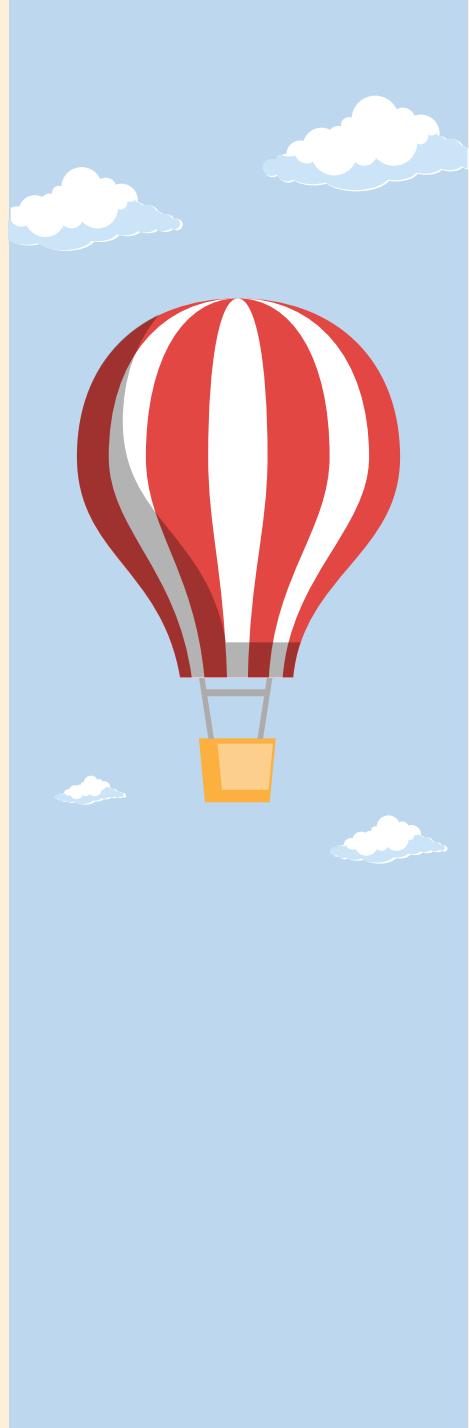
# Moving up the level descriptors



Level 4		Typical Features
AO1 TASK	AO1 REFS	Clear, explained response to task and whole text Effective use of references to support explanation
AO2		Clear explanation of writer's methods with appropriate use of relevant subject terminology
AO2		Understanding of effects of writer's methods to create meanings
AO3		Clear understanding of ideas / perspectives / contextual factors shown by specific links between context / text / task

Level 6	Typical Features	These responses tend to...
AO1 TASK AO1 REFS AO2 AO2 AO3	Critical, exploratory, conceptualised response to task and whole text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on the text as conscious construct</li> <li>Present a coherent argument</li> <li>Use references from the text dynamically to develop an argument / interpretation</li> <li>Analyse aspects of writer's craft: really look closely at the effects of a writer's choice, linked closely to meanings</li> <li>Present a clear overview of the text in terms of writer's purpose and context.</li> </ul> <p>This is a student who might have a clear thesis or 'concept' to explore in terms of the task and the text, and therefore the response is an illustration of their concept – they are using the text as illustration of their interpretation of the text. A convincing, critical argument will be driven by a 'concept' - something they want to say and explore about the text in relation to the task. Basically, a 'conceptualised' response is an answer to a question that is driven by a clear point of view about the text. Their 'concept' or their 'idea' is driving their response. Also, responses at this level might take more of an analytical approach to the text, looking closely at elements of method and selecting very precise, fine-grained references to illustrate their argument. Responses at this level are 'exploratory' in terms of ideas and/or writer's purpose, and sometimes 'analytical' in style.</p>
	Judicious use of precise references to support interpretation(s)	
	Analysis of writer's methods with subject terminology used judiciously	
	Exploration of effects of writer's methods to create meanings	
	Exploration of ideas / perspectives / contextual factors shown by specific, detailed links between context / text / task	
Level 5	Typical Features	These responses tend to...
AO1 TASK AO1 REFS AO2 AO2 AO3	Thoughtful, developed response to task and whole text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start to really think about ideas in the question in a developed way</li> <li>Go deeper / broader than 'this is what it means' and start to explore layers of meaning / readings, using elements of the text to illustrate their ideas</li> <li>Start to focus in a thoughtful way on specific elements of writer's craft, linked to meanings</li> <li>Focus clearly on the abstract: themes and ideas, writers' purpose and intention, context.</li> </ul> <p>Responses at level 5 start to go a bit deeper, or a bit wider, than the abstract of 'this is what it means'. Perhaps they are looking at elements or ideas from different points of view, considering layers of meaning / interpretations, or starting to consider ideas in a more developed, deeper way than level 4. There will be clear connections between methods and ideas at this level. Level 4 tends to have a clear 'this is what it means' approach, whereas level 5 often starts to be more tentative in approach. There is more of a sense of thoughtful consideration of ideas and of methods used to present ideas at level 5.</p>
	Apt references integrated into interpretation(s)	
	Examination of writer's methods with subject terminology used effectively to support consideration of methods	
	Examination of effects of writer's methods to create meanings	
	Thoughtful consideration of ideas / perspectives / contextual factors shown by examination of detailed links between context / task	

## Convincing, critical analysis and exploration

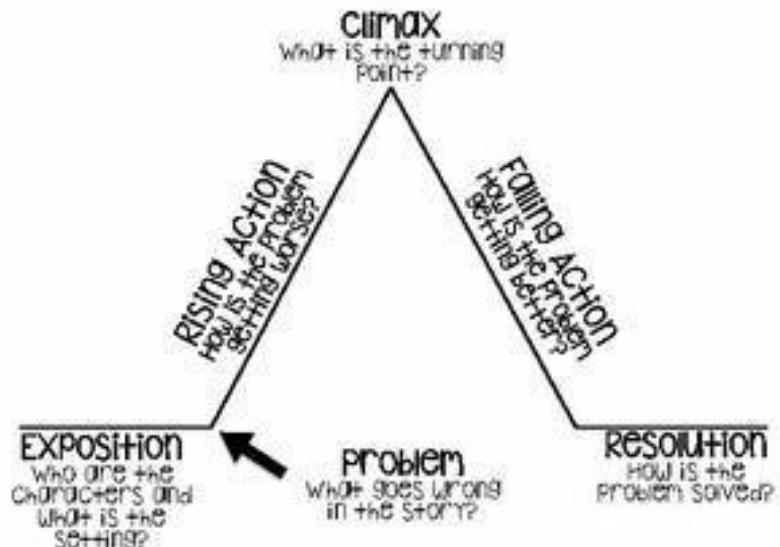


Both poets are challenging the control that inherited power has over the less fortunate in society. Browning indirectly via his persona, and Blake directly through his visceral imagery. They use the characters featured in their poems to highlight the plight of the powerless, to justify their political standpoints and to criticise this society that abuse their power.

Blake, an early Romantic poet, uses 'London' to illustrate the harms caused by capitalism and the industrial revolution and the corruption and neglect as a result of institutionalised religion. Browning, an abolition activist, uses the figure of the Duke of Ferrara to mock those responsible for violent injustices.

# Structures to support success

## STORY ARC



## 5 point planning



Engage...

Because...

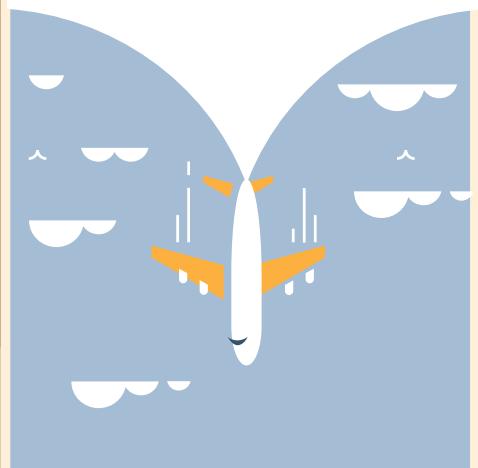
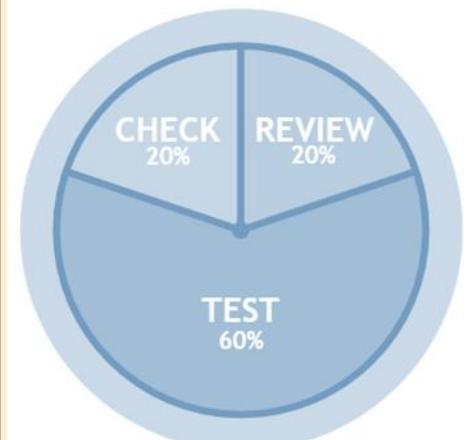
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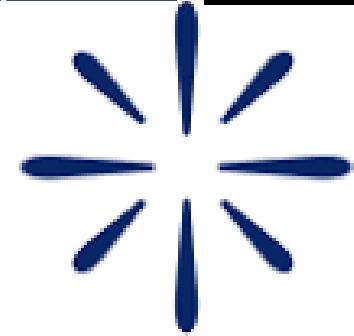
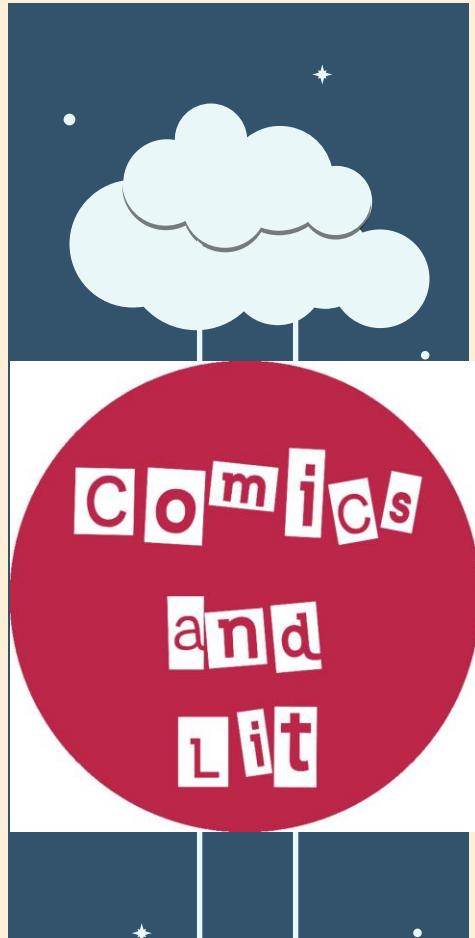
But...

So...

# Top tips for revision and exam preparation

1. Move from revising content to practising exam technique.
2. Don't be tempted to cram before the exam - build confidence with little and often revision of literature texts.
3. Expose yourself to high quality writing to practise responding to unseen texts and to inspire your own writing.
4. Rehearse exam skills by building timed responses into your revision.





# SENECA

