

The National 5 and Higher/Advanced Higher English exams are fast approaching and along with these there comes a period of study leave. During this time the usual timetable is suspended for senior pupils. This happens in order to enable appropriate preparation for assessment across the curriculum.

It's important that students should be helped to use this time wisely. In order to assist parents and carers with this the English Department at NBHS has put together some suggestions from staff. These might help students in their revision work in preparation for the English examinations. This advice is specific to preparation for assessments in English although some of the advice is of a more general nature.

Students have already been issued with this advice but please reinforce these messages in order to encourage the very best outcome from the exams.

- Write a study plan that takes **all subjects** into account.
- **Divide the day** into three parts: morning, afternoon and evening. Revise for two of these and take a break for the third.
- Spread revision out into **small 'chunks'** i.e. an hour of revision per subject, per day, over a period of several weeks, rather than cramming the night before (known as 'spaced retrieval practice')
- Put your **phone in a different room** when revising to help avoid distractions! Ask your parent/guardian to **take your phone** from you to help you focus.
- Reward yourself **AFTER** you've done your revision with something you enjoy (TV, meeting friends...)
- Try to build in some time each day to get some **fresh air/ go for a walk** etc...
- Have a **dedicated space** for studying. Do not revise in/on your bed!
- Use the **online resources** available to you: Google classroom, Scholar, SQA website, SparkNotes and Shmoop are particularly useful.
- Write **essay plans** and use highlighters to **colour code** themes and quotes.
- **Practise** choosing questions, writing plans, writing intros/conclusions, analysing quotations.
- Stick **post-it notes** around your house with quotes/ analysis on them.
- Use **flashcards**: one side with a quote; the other with analysis.
- Look at SQA **marking schemes** for RUAE.
- Look at the summarised **SQA report** for last year's exam.
- Start revision **early** in study leave.
- **Teach someone** what you know - it's a good way to remember and prove your knowledge.
- Do past papers under **timed conditions**.
- **Time yourself** - but don't stop if you run out of time. Put a mark on your paper and complete all tasks. This way you will be able to practise the final RUAE question.
- Test your friends. **Do quizzes** with each other. Design some quick subject related questions.
- **Read your core texts again**. There is no substitute for familiarity with the text.
- Focus more on the work you find **challenging**. There's little point in focusing too much on the stuff you find easy.
- Look at past papers and work out what **skills** you need to have and what **information** you need to know. Then prioritise - **essentials, helpfuls, luxuries**.
- **Don't rely on the 'prepared essay'**. It's a poor tactic which depends on luck rather than control.
- Don't fixate on missing a study session. **Move on** and ensure you don't miss more.
- **Keep reading** quality broadsheet newspapers and non-fiction prose.
- If in doubt **seek help** from your teacher.
- **Use the school!** The school is still there for you to use during study leave. It has all the facilities you need and loads of teachers who are there to help you.