

WJEC GCSE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE



Victoria Peers

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Everyone has to decide his or her own revision strategy, but it is essential to review your work, learn it and test your understanding. These Revision Notes will help you to do that in a planned way, topic by topic. Use this book as the cornerstone of your revision and don't hesitate to write in it — personalise your notes and check your progress by ticking off each section as you revise.

☒

- revised and understood a topic
- tested yourself
- practised the exam questions and gone online to check your answers and complete the quick quizzes

Exam tips

Expert tips are given throughout the book to help you polish your exam technique in order to maximise your chances in the exam.

The author identifies the typical mistakes candidates make and explains how you can avoid them.

These short, knowledge-based questions provide the first step in testing your learning. Answers are at the back of the book.

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Features to help you succeed

Clear, concise definitions of essential key terms are provided where they first appear.

Key words from the specification are highlighted in bold throughout the book.

Practice exam questions are provided for each topic. Use them to consolidate your revision and practise your exam skills.

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Introduction

Welcome to *My Revision Notes for WJEC GCSE English Language*.

This book is designed to reinforce the skills required for success in both the examination and non-examination units of WJEC GCSE English. It will take you through the different types of questions and point out how to impress the examiner. There are also skills units, focusing on those special areas that are rewarded in the mark schemes.

There is essential information, annotated and graded answers and further practice tasks so that you can consolidate your learning and develop your potential. In each unit, you can judge what you have produced against the demands of the mark schemes; and, crucially, there are:

- Exam Tips
- Typical Mistakes to avoid
- Key Terms you will need
- Test Yourself sections, so you can see the progress you are making.

The book links closely to the *WJEC GCSE English Language Student's Book*, which will further support what you are learning here. In the Student's Book, there are the same units and skills but more intensive practice.

Both books aim to be fun to work with. The texts and tasks have been selected to offer range and interest, so that you can enjoy the preparation as well as develop your skills and improve your grades.

Also, both books offer short, precise practices in clear, targeted units and are based on the same idea: if you know what the examiner is looking for and you prepare properly for your *big day*, you are much more likely to do well.

If you work through the information and tasks and respond to the advice offered, you can enter the exam room feeling confident, knowing exactly how to respond to each task and how to demonstrate your ability so that the examiner can reward you highly.

We are aiming for improvement and success!

Good luck with your revision!

Vicki Peers

What you have to do in the externally assessed exams

The exam papers

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You will have to complete two examination papers. Each lasts for two hours.

Unit 2

Section A:

- There will be a series of structured questions based on extracts from at least one description, one narration and one exposition text.
- There will also be an editing task.
- You will have one hour for this section: 10 minutes to read and 50 minutes to answer.

Section B:

- You will be offered two writing tasks but you must only complete **one** of them.
- You will have to write to describe, narrate (tell a story) **or** explain.
- There will also be a proofreading task focusing on writing accuracy.
- You will have one hour for this section: 10 minutes to complete the proofreading task, 10 minutes to plan and 40 minutes to write.

Unit 3

Section A:

- There will be a series of structured questions based on extracts from at least one argumentation, one persuasion and one instructional text.
- You will have one hour for this section: 10 minutes to read and 50 minutes to answer.

Section B:

- You will be given **two compulsory** writing tasks: one will be writing to argue and one will be writing to persuade.
- You will have one hour for this section: 10 minutes to plan and 50 minutes to write.

All the following skills will be tested

Across Section A, you will be tested on your ability to:

- find information and evaluate the usefulness or content
- analyse and respond to a wide range of written texts and link evidence from a range of different texts
- use inference and deduction to interpret meaning, themes, ideas and information
- support what you say with evidence from the texts
- display an understanding of appropriate word choice and sequence ideas in a logical way.

Across Section B you will be tested on your ability to:

- communicate clearly and effectively
- write appropriately for purpose and audience
- organise your writing effectively
- use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures
- spell and punctuate accurately.

Countdown to my exams



6–8 weeks to go

- Focus on the information on page 7, so you know exactly what the exam involves.
- Read through the revision planner on pages 4 and 5 to familiarise yourself with the skills you need to develop.
- Begin to work through the sections in this book – perhaps using 40-minute sessions once or twice a week. Tick off the sections as you complete them.
- Pay particular attention to the ‘How to prepare for the exam’ advice and add those practices to your revision.

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2–6 weeks to go

- Continue to work through this book.
- Test your understanding of each topic by working through the ‘Test yourself’ questions in the book. Check your answers on page 93.
- Identify the areas in which you have weaknesses. Go back through those sections in this book and prioritise those areas for extra revision work.
- Ask your teacher for help with anything you find especially tricky.
- Track your progress using the revision planner and give yourself a reward when you have achieved your target.
- Attend any revision classes put on by your teacher. Remember, he or she is an expert at preparing people for examinations.

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One week to go

- Use this book to help you with any areas in which you still have weaknesses.
- Use your teacher to provide any extra input, clarification or advice you need.

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The day before the examination

- Flick through these Revision Notes for useful reminders, for example, the Exam tips and Typical mistakes.
- Check the time and place of your examination.
- Make sure you have everything you need — extra pens and pencils, tissues, a watch, bottled water.
- Allow some time to relax and have an early night to ensure you are fresh and alert for the examinations.

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My exams

GCSE English Language Unit 2

Date:

Time:

Location:

GCSE English Language Unit 3

Date:

Time:

Location:

What does Unit 1 Oracy involve?

What you have to do

This is a non-examination unit which means it will be assessed by your teacher. There are two tasks and they are very straightforward. You just need to know what you are doing!

There are two tasks in this unit and for both you will need to demonstrate that you can do the following:

- Present and organise information clearly and purposefully.
- Sustain and adapt your talk in formal and informal situations using a variety of language techniques as appropriate.
- Listen and respond appropriately to other speakers' ideas, questions and perspectives.
- Interact with others, making suggestions, giving comments and asking questions.
- Draw ideas together.
- Use a range of appropriate sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate grammar and expression.

Half of the marks available are for using the correct register, grammar and a range of sentence structures. The other half is for the content and organisation of your talk.

Task 1 – Individual researched presentation

This task is worth 40 marks, which is 10 per cent of your overall grade so it is worth preparing well.

You will prepare and deliver an individual, researched presentation, which may include responses to questions and feedback, based on one of the following WJEC set themes:

- 1 Wales
- 2 Leisure
- 3 The world of work
- 4 The world of science/technology
- 5 Citizenship

It is expected that your presentation will last between five and seven minutes, including responding to questions from the audience.

You will be given some time to prepare for the task, when you should be independently researching your subject. You can do this by:

- using the internet
- reading newspapers and/or magazines
- looking through reference books or information texts like leaflets
- watching relevant TV programmes such as documentaries
- asking people questions.

You are not allowed to script your piece but you can use cue cards or prompts and you may want to use a visual stimulus too, such as a prop or a PowerPoint, to facilitate your speech.

As with all aspects of this exam, it is important you consider your **purpose** and **audience** so you first need to decide what kind of talk you are going to give and to whom.

You might want to present an informative, persuasive or entertaining talk to an audience of your peers (friends) or you may wish to imagine the audience is a council, a governing body or a group of officials. This will affect your approach.

Below you will find examples of the kinds of topics you may want to research, based on each of the themes available or you can come up with your own ideas, after talking to your teacher.

Theme 1: Wales

- What it means to you to be Welsh – focus on identity and culture
- Devolution – advantages and disadvantages
- Wales as a tourist destination

Theme 2: Leisure

- Sport as leisure
- Discuss the importance of leisure time in today's busy society.
- Persuade the audience to take up your hobby or leisure pursuit.

Theme 3: The world of work

- Discuss your hopes and ambitions for the future in terms of a job or career.

Exam tip

You need to be prepared for questions at the end of your piece. How you answer these will affect your assessment so think about what people might ask you and prepare some responses so you can answer confidently and in an extended way.

- Present the case for all teenagers having part-time jobs.
- Discuss the importance of work-experience placements to pupils.

Theme 4: The world of science/technology

- Explain the impact the internet has had on society.
- Discuss recent advances in modern medicine.
- Robot workers – will they steal our jobs?

Theme 5: Citizenship

- Crime and punishment: – is our justice system fit for purpose?
- Politics – why should young people get involved?
- How can we fix the environment?

Task

Choose one of these topics and plan five points you could research to include in a speech.

Planning your speech

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Topic

The first step to planning your speech is to choose a topic.

It's important you choose a topic you know about or at least can do the relevant research for because if you're passionate and knowledgeable about the topic, it will come through in your speech.

Exam tip

It is a good idea to speak with your teacher about the topic you want to present on. They can help you decide what approach to take.

Research

Once you know what you want to talk about, you'll need to do lots of research, probably much more than you think. Try to use a range of sources for your research; don't just rely on the internet. If it's appropriate, gather a mix of facts and statistics but also opinions and people's points of view on a topic. Then put all of your information into a concept map so you can begin to sequence it.

Purpose and audience

Being clear on your purpose for the speech and knowing your audience will allow you to tailor your content and register to the situation. For example, it may not be appropriate to use humour if you are presenting to officials or if you are discussing a serious topic, but you may want to use it if you are talking to your peers.

Your message

At the heart of every good speech is a message. Think carefully about what your message is before you begin to write your speech. For example, you may want to persuade your audience to take up your favourite sport, ensure they are aware of the dangers of relying on technology too much or point out the flaws in our justice system. Whatever your message, you must make sure the audience hear it clearly and that they come away from your talk understanding a little more about the topic.

Links

For a speech to be effective, your points will need to be linked. It is not enough simply to say, ‘The next point I am going to mention is ...’ as this kind of movement between points is too formulaic. Instead, carefully consider the points you want to make in the main section of the speech and try to find sensible links between them. This re-ordering of ideas will allow you to move from one point to the next in a much smoother way and will allow your audience to follow your points more easily.

Task

Imagine you are going to deliver a speech about your favourite football team and you have planned to include the following points:

- The player you dislike the most and why
- What you think the future holds for your team
- The player you like the most and why
- How you became interested in the sport and this particular team
- The experience of attending your first match
- Your thoughts about current and previous management

Think carefully about the order of these points and rearrange them in a more logical and engaging way, numbering them 1 to 6.

Structuring your speech

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It is always a good idea to plan the structure of your talk carefully. You need to think about the beginning, the middle and the end.

You might want to structure your talk as follows:

Introduction

The first 30 seconds of your talk are really important. In that time, you must grab the attention of the audience and engage their interest in what you have to say. This can be done in a number of different ways. For example, you could raise a thought-provoking question, make an interesting or controversial statement, recite a relevant quotation or even recount a joke. Depending on your audience, you will have to decide what you think is most appropriate.

- Start with a welcoming introduction that tells the audience who you are and outlines the main topic and why it is important to you.
- Try to give a comment, idea or statistic that will immediately interest the audience.

Main body

Once you have won the attention of the audience, you should move seamlessly to the middle of your speech. In this section, you will need to make a number of well-developed points and, where possible, each new point should build upon the previous one.

- For a five-minute speech, it is sensible to have five or six well-developed ideas, views or arguments that are logically sequenced with carefully selected connectives and topic sentences to join the points together and move the talk on.
- Consider quality over quantity here; don't overwhelm your listeners with countless points. It is better to make a small number of points well than have too many, none of which are made satisfactorily.

Conclusion

Like your opening, the closing of your talk must contain some of your strongest material. Try to see the closing of your speech as a final opportunity to get your message across to your audience.

- You need a conclusion that purposefully summarises the main points of the talk and leaves the audience with a thorough understanding of the topic or issues discussed.
- You may also want to give them information as to where they can find out more about the topic: a website, a book they could read, or a phone number to call.
- The last thing you must remember to do is to invite questions from the audience.

Task – closings

Which of these are **not** appropriate ways to end your speech?

- Thank you for listening, any questions?
- The end.
- I'm glad that's over, I was really nervous.
- If you'd like to learn more about this topic, you can visit www.answersforyou.com.
- Right, done. Can I sit down now?
- Thank you for attending today and, if you have any questions, I'll be happy to answer them.

Answers

Hopefully you chose: b, c, e.

Task – Who's the audience?

Look at the following lines taken from speeches. Can you match up the most suitable opening/ending with its audience?

Openings

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| a) 'Good afternoon, my name is ...' | 1 Your peers |
| b) 'Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, my name is ...' | 2 School Council |
| c) 'Hi, guys, today I'd like to talk about ...' | 3 Parents of Year 6 students |

Endings

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| a) 'Thank you very much for listening.' | 1 Parents of Year 6 students |
| b) 'I appreciate you taking time out of your busy schedules to listen to me today.' | 2 Your peers |
| c) 'I hope you enjoyed my speech and will think about ...' | 3 School governors |

Answers

Hopefully you got: a) 2, b) 3, c) 1 and then a) 1, b) 3 and c) 2.

Exam tip

The correct opening and ending will ensure you sustain the correct level of formality throughout your speech so think about it very carefully.

Sentence starters

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When you first start writing a speech, it can be very daunting. So, to help you begin your points, here are some useful sentence starters:

- ‘Today, I am going to explore/explain/compare/describe/entertain you with ...’
This outlines the topic that will be discussed.
- ‘I hope this will provide us with some understanding/the knowledge /...’
This is useful for letting the audience know what you want them to take away at the end of the talk.
- ‘I will be happy to take any questions you may have at the end of this presentation.’
This is good to clarify exactly how and when you want them to ask their questions.
- ‘I will start by discussing/explaining/outlining ...’
- ‘Next I would like to move on to ...’
- ‘Looking at this issue in greater detail we can see ...’
- ‘Consequently, this leads us to ...’
- ‘I am sure that you would all agree that an equally important issue is ...’
- ‘Some people would argue ... however, ...’
These are useful when thinking about connections between points and transitions.

Exam tip

Half of the marks for this unit will be awarded for the choice of appropriate register, grammatical accuracy and the use of a range of sentence structures. The other half will be for the content and organisation of your talk.

So, once you have planned **what** you are going to say, you need to plan **how** you are going to say it.

Mark scheme

This task is marked out of 40. Read through this student-friendly version of the mark scheme.

Band	Content and organisation	Register, grammatical accuracy and range of sentence structures
5	The talk is carefully constructed to engage the audience. Ideas are complex and the structure is carefully planned to emphasise certain points.	The talk is wholly suited to the audience and its purpose. There is a range of ambitious vocabulary and sentence structures. Grammar, tense and agreement are secure throughout.
4	The talk is adapted to fit the audience. Ideas are conveyed confidently and important points are explained in detail.	The talk is always appropriate for the audience and purpose. There is a wide range of vocabulary and sentence structures. Grammar, tense and agreement are secure.
3	The talk is organised to fit with the audience. Ideas are clearly communicated and there is reference made to important points.	The talk shows an awareness of the audience and purpose. There is a good range of vocabulary and varied sentence structures. Grammar, tense and agreement are mostly secure.
2	There is an attempt to organise the talk to fit with the audience. Ideas are usually straightforward and there is some reference to important details.	The talk shows some awareness of the audience and purpose. There is some range in vocabulary and some variety of sentence structure. Grammar, tense and agreement are generally secure.
1	The talk shows some awareness of audience. Ideas are brief with little or no development. Encouragement may be needed from others.	There is only a limited range of vocabulary, limited sentence structures and limited control of grammar, tense and agreement.

Task

For both columns in the mark scheme above, highlight the key words that appear in each of the bands.

What do you think are the most important things to think about when planning your talk?

Typical mistakes

People focus too much on the content and what they are going to say but don't plan **how** they are going to say it. They use too much slang, incorrect grammar and rely heavily on only simple and compound sentences.

Test yourself

TESTED

Read this example talk written about sport, in response to the theme on leisure.

Good afternoon.

Sport is my absolute favourite leisure activity. I go running and play tennis, swim every other day and lift weights in my spare time. I have lots of trophies, gathered over the last five years in secondary school. I collect athletes' autographs and I have a signed poster of Ronaldo next to my bed. I also like extreme sports that offer a full body experience, such as abseiling, bungee jumping and wind surfing. Like many people my age, I am crazy about sports.

But, when I watch sports on TV, it upsets me that athletes often risk their health just for my pleasure. They are like super humans but their increased stress and frequent sports injuries make me somewhat sad. Sporting injuries are inherent in commercialised sport; otherwise nobody would pay our athletes that well. Yet there should be limitations, as sport is only good for us when it brings about positive emotions for both the participants and the viewers. Sport events take place everywhere and on a regular basis. Viewing sports is one of the most popular pastime activities for people in the UK. I guess it is the feeling of being connected that sport creates, the sense of belonging to a team.

To profit from sports and to gain in popularity, athletes risk their health because world records are risky. The TV cameras follow every crash, every injury, every drop of blood spilt. It is disgusting to see and upsets me no end. For me, athletes are heroes. They make me promise myself to train harder, to train more regularly and tell me that this will lead to achievement, maybe not today but perhaps tomorrow. I like the enthusiasm, the energy, the force created by sport. So, watching sport is good.

But is it really good to know that athletes cheat us, their fans, using special technologies and drugs to become supermen physically? Sport has begun to mutate. Genuine human ability is no longer what counts, it is no longer competitive, and athletes are turning into sports machines that manufacture results with their bodies as machines.

Sport is good for us, if it reveals how powerful our bodies are. But sport is of no use if it goes against Mother Nature. It should be naturally not artificially driven. I am for sport that does not cheat nature and is a real competition of strength and physical might. I like sports as they are – entertaining, competitive, and spectacular. I like watching how others succeed in their sports lives but I want to know they got there on their own merit.

Thank you for listening. Does anyone have any questions?

- 1 Go through the talk and highlight examples of:
 - good vocabulary
 - effective use of sentence structures
 - correct use of grammar
 - times when the speaker shows awareness of the audience.
- 2 Using the mark scheme, what grade do you think this speech would get?
- 3 What advice would you give the writer in order to improve the speech?

How to prepare for the exam

You need to practise giving a speech so here are some hints and tips.

- **Rehearse!** Performing in front of a mirror will help you to see your facial expressions and body language. You could go one step further and film yourself so you can look back and decide what works and what doesn't. Why not also round up some family and friends to be your audience and give a talk? Have them ask you some questions so you know how it feels and what to expect.
- **Relax!** It is OK to be nervous, but your body language says a lot about you. If you appear confident, others will believe it.
- **Don't slouch!** Keep your head held high and your shoulders back – slouching inhibits your diaphragm (the area of your chest that controls your breathing), so you won't be able to project your voice as well.
- **Speak up!** There is no point in making an amazing, award-winning speech if people can't hear it. Imagine what impact Martin Luther King or Sir Bob Geldof would have had if they had mumbled. Just above conversational tone is perfect – any louder than this and you are shouting.
- **Vary your tone!** Think of the 'computer says no' girl from *Little Britain* – that's what you sound like if you don't vary your tone. Your listeners want to hear genuine emotion and expression in your voice, so that they know you are truly passionate about your subject matter. Whether you are angry or sad, you should convey it with your tone.
- **Pause!** This will help you to emphasise important points in your speech and give your audience time to react. This is true for all speeches, but especially if there is humour involved – allow your listeners time to get your joke or point.
- **Slow down!** The general rule of thumb is that if you think you are speaking too slowly, you are speaking at just the right pace for your audience.
- **Make eye contact!** This is subconsciously taken as an indication of confidence. By looking at someone, you engage their interest and force them to listen to you. Don't hold one person's gaze for too long, however, as they will feel intimidated. Instead make eye contact with a number of people in turn.
- **Keep your hands to yourself!** Small hand gestures are fine, but throwing your hands about wildly will make you look silly. We all talk with our hands to a certain degree, but try not to do it to excess. Don't fiddle with items in your pocket or pieces of clothing, and don't twirl your hair either as this is distracting and makes you look bored and disinterested.
- **Practise your timing!** Practise making your speech before you deliver it so that you know where you need to breathe and pause. You will feel more confident if you are comfortable with your timing and subject matter.
- **ABC:** Remember to **a**rticulate, use appropriate **b**ody language and think carefully about your **c**ontent.