

# How To Improve Your Child's



## English Grades

### **Parental/ Guardian Support**

The most effective way a student can improve his/ her English is with parental/guardian support. Your child's English teacher can educate him/her on the theories and principles of English - however the homework and coursework are opportunities for the student to show the teacher their ability. This is where parents/ guardians can support them!

### **How English Teachers Work**

English teachers work through a variety of schemes of work with your children. During which time, teachers will prepare students for an assessed piece of work. So for example, if the scheme of work was on 'Newspapers', the teacher would prepare the class on:

- The layout of a tabloid/ broadsheet newspaper front page.
- Differences in style/ formality between tabloid and broadsheet newspapers.
- How to structure an article.
- The appropriate language/ devices.
- How to include quotes.
- How to recognise bias.

Students would then be asked to write their draft copy of a newspaper article, using the knowledge they had gained over the series of lessons.

Once that was completed, students would then be given the opportunity to peer mark and self-assess their work, before improving/ proofreading it; not just copying it up again, only neater! They would then be expected to produce a final piece of work for assessment.

### **Attendance**

Parents/ guardians can support the English teacher and their child's progress, by making sure their child attends regularly; just one or two missed lessons can significantly affect the knowledge needed to complete the assessed task.

### **Planners**

Checking the homework planner is another way in which parents/ guardians can support their children. By checking the planner, you can discuss what is being set for homework with your son/daughter. What kind of techniques do they need to include? What does the teacher want to see in the finished work? This will help your child remember the objectives of the task.

### **Checking Targets**

You can discuss past pieces of work for improvement areas. Teachers

highlight areas for concern down the margin. They then write a comment at the end of the work to set future targets. Encourage your son/daughter to think about previous future targets. What are their areas of weakness? Have they checked their work to make sure they have met these targets?

### **What Work Is Assessed For**

Generally tasks fall into three areas:

- **Speaking and Listening** - How confident are students when joining in with class discussions? How well do they build on other people's suggestions? How well do they listen to other people's views
- **Writing** - How accurate is their spelling, punctuation and paragraphing? Have they used a sophisticated range of vocabulary? Has their tone of voice and content matched the purpose of the task?
- **Reading** - Can they identify the writer's purpose behind the text? How has the writer used language etc. to achieve this purpose? Can they show an understanding of the social and historical context of the extract?

### **Tips On How To Help Your Child**

- Discuss newspapers/ news.
- When watching the TV, discuss the subject material to express opinions.
- Play games like Balderdash, Trivial Pursuit and Scattegories etc. to encourage speaking and listening skills.
- Encourage your child to read by reading yourself. You can discuss the books and how effective you found them.
- Visit your local library.
- Cut back on distractions (MSN/ Xbox) so your child can read - reading provides them with a wealth of ideas and extends their vocabulary.
- Play games like Scrabble and Boggle to help spelling.
- Practice spellings - the old fashioned look, cover and check method is still effective!
- For exam texts, encourage students to compile a spelling and vocabulary list.
- Purchase a pocket dictionary and thesaurus for them to keep in their bag.
- Make sure the TV is off when they work. However, music has proven to be a study aid if kept as background music.
- Set aside time for your child to complete homework/ coursework in a good working environment.
- Letts/ York Notes/ Bitesize books are all useful resources for SATs / GCSEs.

### **Revision**

Helping year 11 students to revise is beneficial, but year 7 to 10 also need to revise. It is amazing how many times students are taught basic punctuation and grammar rules throughout junior and secondary school, yet they need to be reminded of them every year. This is because students tend to see each new year as a new start. However the curriculum is designed for them to build on past experiences - this means retaining past knowledge!

### **Useful Websites**

- <http://askchris.essexcc.gov.uk> - Essex libraries Ask Chris site with recommended reads for both young people and adults.
- [www.boox.org.uk](http://www.boox.org.uk) - website for teenagers full of inspirational reads.
- [www.cool-reads.co.uk](http://www.cool-reads.co.uk) - hundreds of recommendations for young people aged 10 - 15.
- [www.teenreads.com](http://www.teenreads.com) - interviews, books and information aimed at teenagers.
- [www.worldbookday.com](http://www.worldbookday.com) - recommended reads from the World Book Day website.
- [www.bbc.co.uk/arts/pageturners](http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/pageturners) - information and reviews, plus the chance to chat books on the forum.
- [www.whichbook.net](http://www.whichbook.net) - challenge Whichbook to find the right book for you.