

How to push to grade 7+ in English Literature

Students who achieve higher grades in English literature:

- know the text really well;
- generally begin by responding to the whole text and then dip in and out of both the extract; and whole text;
- are confident with the big ideas and themes;
- use well-chosen references used to develop an interpretation.

Student responses to questions are led by ideas that answer the focus of the question

They can also:

- use clear and relevant explanation rather than just including terms when analysing language;
- use analytical language that shows an understanding that the text has been deliberately created by a writer to convey their ideas;
- use appropriate subject terminology such as 'implied', 'evokes', 'suggests', 'contrast', 'soliloquy', 'allusion' as part of their analysis of language';
- consider characterisation, theme, plot and setting to help them formulate their argument to the question;
- consider the dramatic impact of the extract at that point in the play.

Student responses to questions engage with the text as a work of literature.

In addition, students must use their contextual understanding of texts to:

- show the specific knowledge acquired throughout their course, usually taught by/explored with teachers. For example, e.g. the impact of the social and political structures during the mid-C20 on the working-class in the North-West in '*Blood Brothers*'
- craft a direct response to the context implicit in the question they are answering, eg 'How far does Shakespeare present Lady Macbeth as a powerful woman in '*Macbeth*'?

Student responses should use context to inform but not dominate their response.

Those at the upper reaches of performance provide convincing, eloquently expressed and insightful ideas.

- A feature of the highest-level responses is their knowledge and understanding of the text, which enables them to dip in and out of both the extract and the whole text to select details which support their argument.
- Students who reach the top level of the mark scheme, and indeed achieve full marks on a question, generally write with great clarity and precision about their ideas and understanding. One hallmark of this is often a confident and general vocabulary, which allows them to engage fully with concepts and ideas.