Subject: Year 10 English Literature – Paper 1
Contact: Ms Peterson

Structure of the exam:

- 1 paper – AQA GCSE English Literature Paper 1
- Time allowed: 1 hour 45 minutes
- Section A – Shakespeare: Macbeth (30 marks + 4 marks SPaG)
- Section B – 19th Century Novel: A Christmas Carol (30 marks)
- You must answer one question on each text
- All questions are closed book – you will not have access to the text in the exam

Questions in the exam:

Section A – Macbeth

- One question based on an extract from the play. You must write about the extract AND the play as a whole.
- Your response should cover: the beginning of the play, the middle of the play, the extract itself, and the end of the play.
- For every point you make, you must include: a quotation, an explanation of the language or technique used, and explanation of the language and what it suggests as well as the effect on the audience, and why Shakespeare included this — what did he want the audience to think, feel or react to?
- 30 marks + 4 marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG).

Section B – A Christmas Carol

- One question based on an extract from the novella. You must write about the extract AND the novella as a whole.
- Your response should cover: the beginning of the novella, the middle of the novella, the extract itself, and the end of the novella.
- For every point you make, you must include: a quotation, an explanation of the language or technique used, the effect on the reader, and why Dickens included this — what did he want the reader to think, feel or react to?
- 30 marks. No SPaG marks in this section.

How you are assessed — Assessment Objectives:

Section A — Macbeth and Section B — A Christmas Carol		
AO	**Assessed in**	**What it means**
AO1	Both sections	Read, understand and respond to texts. Students should be able to: • maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response • use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.
AO2	Both sections	Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.

AO3	Both sections	Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written. Context must be embedded within your analysis — not added as a separate sentence at the end of a paragraph. Ask yourself: how does knowing when and why this was written change what this language choice means? Think about what Shakespeare or Dickens wanted their audience or reader to think, feel or react to, and why — this is your context.
AO4	Section A only (SPaG – 4 marks)	Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.

Essential subject revision:

Type of revision	Resources needed	Time required
Learn key quotations Memorise at least two quotations for each character and theme in both texts.	Knowledge organisers and class notes Macbeth – AQA GCSE English Literature – BBC Bitesize ALL Lesson are on TEAMS.	30 minutes minimum
Practise essay writing Write timed paragraphs using the structure: point → quotation → analysis of language → link to context.	Past AQA Literature Paper 1 questions and mark schemes A Christmas Carol – BBC Bitesize	45 minutes

Additional subject revision:

Type of revision	Resources needed	Time required
Context revision Revise the historical and social context of both texts: Jacobean England (Macbeth) and Victorian poverty and social reform (A Christmas Carol).	Class notes and knowledge organisers	20 minutes
Whole-text knowledge Re-read key scenes and chapters. Practise summarising what happens in each act / stave from memory.	Your copy of the texts or revision guides	30 minutes per text minimum
Self-quizzing Test yourself using a range of strategies: (1) Blurting – write everything you can remember about a character or theme, then check and fill gaps in a different colour. (2) Look, cover, write, check – learn a quotation, cover it, write it from memory, then check. (3) Mind maps – one per character and theme for each text. (4) Flashcards – key quotation on one side, analysis and context on the other.	Knowledge organisers, class notes, paper and pens	20–30 minutes per strategy

Macbeth — Learning Checklist		
Section	**Can I recall...?**	✓
Act 1	The witches' opening prophecies and what they predict for Macbeth and Banquo	
	How Duncan rewards Macbeth and names Malcolm as his heir	
	Lady Macbeth's reaction to the letter and her plan to murder Duncan	
	Macbeth's soliloquy and his doubts before the murder	
Act 2	The dagger soliloquy and what it reveals about Macbeth's state of mind	
	The murder of Duncan and Macbeth's immediate reaction	
	Lady Macbeth's role in covering up the murder	
	The discovery of Duncan's body and Macbeth becoming king	
Act 3	Macbeth's decision to have Banquo and Fleance killed and why	
	The appearance of Banquo's ghost at the banquet	
	Lady Macbeth's attempts to calm Macbeth in front of the guests	
	The growing rift between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth	
Act 4	Macbeth's second visit to the witches and the three new apparitions	
	The murder of Macduff's family	
	Malcolm testing Macduff's loyalty in England	
	The decision to march on Macbeth	
Act 5	Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking scene and what it reveals	
	Macbeth's reaction to Lady Macbeth's death	
	The fulfilment of the witches' prophecies (Birnam Wood, no man of woman born)	
	Macduff killing Macbeth and Malcolm becoming king	
Key Characters	Macbeth: his ambition, his moral decline and his relationship with power	
	Lady Macbeth: her early dominance, her guilt and her breakdown	
	The Witches: their role in tempting Macbeth and the theme of the supernatural	
	Macduff: his loyalty to Scotland and his role as a foil to Macbeth	
	Banquo: his honesty and moral contrast with Macbeth	
	Duncan: his trust, his goodness and the significance of his murder	
	Malcolm: his caution and his role in restoring rightful order	
Themes	Ambition: how unchecked ambition leads to Macbeth's downfall	
	Power: how the desire for power corrupts Macbeth and Lady Macbeth	
	Death and violence: the cycle of killing and its consequences	
	Deception: the role of appearance vs reality throughout the play	
	Suffering and guilt: how guilt manifests in both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth	
	Evil and the supernatural: the witches' influence and the disruption of the natural order	

A Christmas Carol — Learning Checklist		
Section	**Can I recall...?**	✓
Stave 1	Scrooge's character at the opening and his treatment of others	
	The significance of Marley's Ghost and the warning he gives Scrooge	
	The chains Marley carries and what they represent	
	The announcement of the three spirits	
Stave 2	The Ghost of Christmas Past and what it looks like	
	Scrooge's childhood and schooldays – loneliness and isolation	
	The scene at Fezziwig's and what it shows about generosity	
	Belle breaking off the engagement and what it reveals about Scrooge's values	
Stave 3	The Ghost of Christmas Present and the Cratchit family Christmas	
	Tiny Tim and the significance of his character	
	Scrooge's nephew Fred and his attitude towards Christmas	
	Ignorance and Want – the two children hidden under the spirit's robe	
Stave 4	The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come – its appearance and what it represents	
	Reactions to Scrooge's death – relief, theft, indifference	
	Tiny Tim's death and its effect on the Cratchit family	
	Scrooge's gravestone and his desperate plea to change	
Stave 5	Scrooge's transformation on Christmas morning	
	How Scrooge treats Bob Cratchit differently and helps the Cratchit family	
	Scrooge's reconciliation with his nephew Fred	
	The message Dickens leaves the reader with about redemption and generosity	
Key Characters	Scrooge: his miserly nature, his transformation and what drives the change	
	Bob Cratchit: his poverty, his loyalty and his dignity	
	Fred: his warmth and generosity as a contrast to Scrooge	
	The Ghost of Jacob Marley: his warning and what he represents about consequences	
	The Ghost of Christmas Past: how it shows Scrooge who he used to be	
	The Ghost of Christmas Present: how it shows Scrooge the suffering around him	
	The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come: how it forces Scrooge to confront his own death and legacy	
Themes	**Redemption:** Scrooge's journey from isolation to generosity and the possibility of change	
	Poverty and social inequality: Dickens's critique of Victorian attitudes towards the poor	
	Family: the contrast between Scrooge's isolation and the warmth of the Cratchit and Fred's families	
	Time: the past, present and future as tools for Scrooge's transformation	
	Wealth, greed and charity: how the pursuit of money corrupts and how generosity redeems	
	The Christmas spirit: what Christmas represents as a symbol of kindness, community and renewal	

Additional subject revision:

Type of revision	Resources needed	Time required
Context revision Revise the historical and social context of both texts: Jacobean England (Macbeth) and Victorian poverty and social reform (A Christmas Carol).	Class notes and knowledge organisers All lesson resources on TEAMS.	20 minutes
Whole-text knowledge Re-read key scenes and chapters. Practise summarising what happens in each act / stave from memory.	Your copy of the texts or revision guides ALL Lessons are on TEAMS.	30 minutes per text
Self-quizzing Test yourself using a range of strategies: (1) Blurting – write everything you can remember about a character or theme, then check and fill gaps in a different colour. (2) Look, cover, write, check – learn a quotation, cover it, write it from memory, then check. (3) Mind maps – one per character and theme for each text. (4) Flashcards – key quotation on one side, analysis and context on the other.	Knowledge organisers, class notes, paper and pens	20–30 minutes per strategy

Useful revision resources:

Resource	Where to find it	What it covers
Seneca Learning	https://senecalearning.com	AQA Macbeth and A Christmas Carol quizzes and retrieval practice
Mr Bruff (YouTube)	https://www.youtube.com/@mrbruff	In-depth video analysis of Macbeth, A Christmas Carol, language and literature
Mr Salles (YouTube)	https://www.youtube.com/@MrSallesTeachesEnglish	Top-band essay walkthroughs and mark scheme breakdowns for both texts
The Exam Whisperer (Instagram)	https://www.instagram.com/theexamwhisperer	Revision tips, quotation cards and exam technique for GCSE English
Steer to Success (Instagram)	https://www.instagram.com/steertosuccess	Revision content, study tips and GCSE English support
The Light Up Hub	https://www.thelightuphub.co.uk	GCSE English revision resources, guides and exam technique support
Physics & Maths Tutor (PMT)	https://www.physicsandmathstutor.com/english-revision/gcse-aqa	Free access to AQA GCSE English Literature past papers, mark schemes and examiner reports
Save My Exams	https://www.savemyexams.com/gcse/english-literature/aqa	Revision notes, model answers and practice questions for AQA English Literature. Free trial available — subscription required for full access.